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THE INDEPENDENT

TUESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 1996 40p

2,902

Disappearing act
The magician who vanished
Section Two

Free Ski Pass
plus ski holidays to be won
See page 8 for token

Cezanne comes to the Tate
The making of a blockbuster
Section Two, Page 8

Half Britain's schools fail to make grade

Inspector blames trendy teaching

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Half of Britain's primary schools and 40 per cent of secondary schools are failing their pupils, according to a damning report by Chris Woodhead, the government's chief inspector, who blames trendy teaching methods for lowering standards.

Labour described the figures as a "very serious indictment" of the Government's education policies, while Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, immediately announced that she would publish this year's league tables for primary schools.

Mr Woodhead says in his annual report published yesterday that schools urgently need to tackle mediocre standards in literacy and numeracy, and teaching in about 20 per cent of lessons was poor.

He also questions the prevalent assumption of teachers for the last 25 years that children should be taught as individuals or in small groups. "I am not saying that whole class teaching should be the only method used but there should be more of it," Mr Woodhead said.

Mrs Shephard defended the Government against the charge that 17 years of Conservative rule had failed to raise school standards by pointing to a series of reforms from regular inspection to national tests.

The report, based on 4,000 inspections, follows last week's national test results when half 11-year-olds failed to reach the expected standards.

Mrs Shephard said the test results and Mr Woodhead's report showed schools must be made fully accountable, adding: "Schools should set targets for their own improvement. The messages in the report are ones which every teacher can – and should – think long and hard about."

David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, said: "This report is a very serious indictment of the failure of the Government to raise standards

in primary schools. There is a real problem which must now be tackled as a matter of urgency."

Mr Woodhead said there was much good news to celebrate in schools, with most lessons rated satisfactory or better, but there were still unacceptably wide variations between different schools' achievement.

"The most successful secondary schools achieve GCSE results twice as good as others in similar socio-economic circumstances and six times better than those achieved by the least successful in the less favoured areas," he said.

His Office for Standards in Education estimates that there are 15,000 bad teachers – about 3 per cent – and 48,000 first-rate ones.

Teaching is worst for seven-to-11-year-olds because some teachers do not have a good grasp of their subject. Standards are too low among 11 to 14-year-olds because schools use their weakest teachers for this age group. Teachers needed to make more use of traditional methods such as phonics in teaching reading, he said.

Teaching methods are not good enough in nearly half primary schools and one-third of secondaries, the report says. One primary school in seven urgently needs to concentrate on spelling and handwriting as well as creativity.

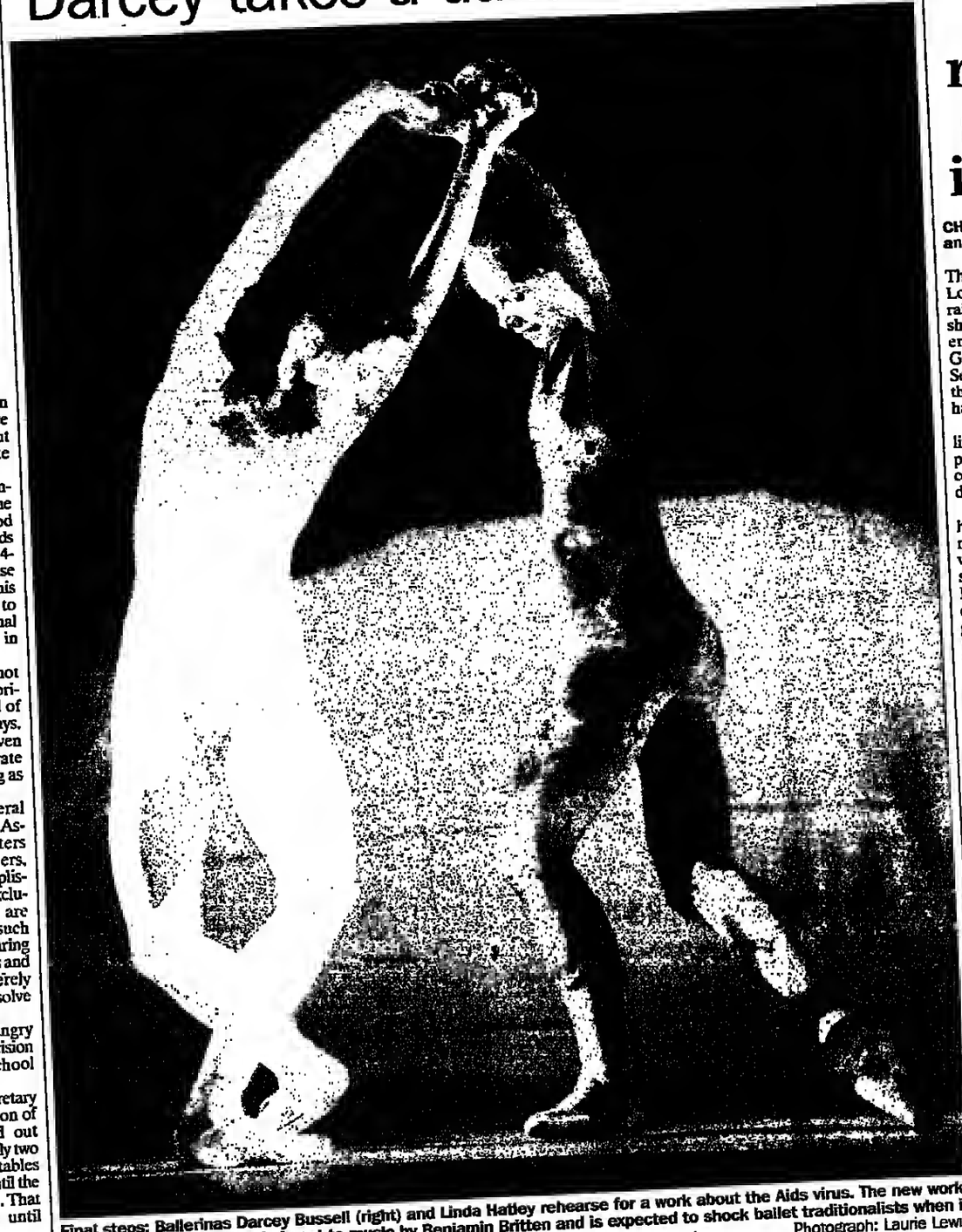
Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, said: "It is wrong and simplistic to blame the failure exclusively on teachers: there are other deep-seated causes such as disruptive children, uncaring and unco-operative parents and curriculum overload. Merely sacking teachers will not solve the problem."

Teachers were also angry about Mrs Shephard's decision to publish primary school league tables next year.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, pointed out that Mrs Shephard said only two weeks ago that league tables would not be published until the tests had "bedded down". That could not be the case until 1997 at the earliest.

Books shortage, page 6
Leading article, page 18

Darcey takes a dance with death



Final steps: Ballerinas Darcey Bussell (right) and Linda Hatley rehearse for a work about the Aids virus. The new work, entitled *Dances with Death*, is set to music by Benjamin Britten and is expected to shock ballet traditionalists when it opens at London's Covent Garden this week. Photograph: Laurie Lewis

Fraud puts rail line sell-off in doubt

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR and COLIN BROWN

The future of the privatised London, Tilbury and Southend rail line, looked increasingly shaky last night after a manager was suspended and Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, said in Parliament that the franchise process may have to be reopened.

Yesterday, Ian Burton, the line's retail manager, was suspended on full pay after the commercial director, Colin Andrews, resigned on Saturday.

Chris Kinchin-Smith, the head of Enterprise Rail, the management buyout team which made the successful bid, said "it was not appropriate for Mr Burton to carry out his duties, some involving passenger safety, while at the same time fully assisting with the investigation."

Sir George confirmed to MPs that the option of inviting a fresh round of tenders for the line was being reviewed by the franchising director, Roger Salmon, and would depend on the outcome of the investigations into irregularities in the LTS management.

Sir George's statement, however, appeared to contradict Mr Salmon who at a ceremony earlier in the day to mark the letting of the two first franchises, South West Trains and Great Western, said: "It was an isolated incident of someone being too clever."

Clare Short, Labour's shadow transport secretary, said the management team should not be allowed to run the service because, if the allegations were true, they had been shown to be corrupt.

The letting of the franchise to the management team was halted within hours of the planned transfer on Saturday night by Sir George after it was revealed that managers at the company had moved tickets

TURN TO PAGE TWO

Minister gave lobbyist Commons pass

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

A government Minister arranged for a lobbyist who represented several large defence contractors to have free access around the House of Commons as his research assistant.

Despite the fact that Barry Joseph has not worked for Richard Page, junior minister at the Department of Trade and Industry, for more than a year, Mr Page sponsored the renewal of his Commons pass last May, three months after he joined the Government.

A research assistant's pass allows Mr Joseph to freely enter the Commons, circulate among MPs and ministers in the bars, restaurants and corridors, use the library and obtain published Parliamentary papers.

In his report last year on standards in public life, Lord Nolan voiced concerns about ties between MPs and lobbyists. Last night Labour called for an inquiry by the Serjeant-at-Arms, the senior Commons official who issues passes. Dale Campbell-Savours, MP for Workington, was writing to the Prime Minister about the affair.

Mr Page, MP for Hertfordshire South West, has responsibility at the DTI for small businesses, industry and energy. He has access to ministerial briefings, participates in top-level departmental discussions and receives advance notice of forthcoming Government announcements.

According to the Commons computer, Mr Joseph's pass is due to expire on 1 May this year. It was renewed for 12 months on 2 May last year. The lobbyist works for British Aerospace, Racal and Rolls-Royce.

Mr Joseph said he had assisted Mr Page before he became a minister last February, when he was a member of the Commons Public Accounts Committee. Mr Joseph said that when Mr Page became a minister, he suggested Mr Jospeh would be able to help with press work in his constituency. "He renewed my application believing I could do some work for him." That did not materialise, said Mr Joseph, and sometime in the middle of last year, the pass was returned.

The Commons pass office yesterday had no record of the pass having been returned.

Mr Page said that Mr Joseph "used to do research when I was on the PAC. He was knowledgable on defence and military things and he did research for me." Asked if he knew Mr Joseph worked for Rolls-Royce and BAe, he said: "He's an adviser to them, yes." The minister said he had "no idea" why he had renewed Mr Joseph's pass. "I have not used him since I have been a minister."

Mr Joseph said he could not remember exactly when the pass was returned but thought it was in the middle of last year.

Background, page 2

Richard Page: Gave lobbyist privileged Commons access

IN BRIEF

Giant step for stores chief

Stephen Hinchliffe (right), owner of Salisbury's, Sock Shop, Conlessa and Oakland Menswear, yesterday became one of Britain's top high street retailers when his private company, Facia, bought the Saxone and Curtess shoe shops. Facia now has 860 branches. No price was disclosed for the deal, but it is thought Mr Hinchliffe paid up to £4m for the 134 Saxone and Curtess branches. Page 20

Buddha's birthplace

The dispute over whereabouts the Buddha was born 2,000 years ago may have been solved by archaeologists. Page 3

Threat to cricket

Cricket's World Cup was in chaos last night after Australia and the West Indies threatened not to play their games in Sri Lanka after last week's bomb attack in Colombo that killed more than 60. Page 28

Today's weather

Rain, snow and sleet heading east across Britain.
Section Two, page 25

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Restaurants soak up a 1,000 per cent profit on water sales

PETER VICTOR

Restaurants are making up to 1,000 per cent profit by selling customers bottles of filtered tap water. Restaurateurs have discovered a new water filter system called Classic Crystal and are using it to treat tap water – which is then bottled and sold to customers at hugely inflated prices.

Classic Crystal, which costs between 10p and 20p a bottle to produce, is on sale at restaurants for anything up to £2.80.

Well-known restaurants selling the water include the People's Palace at the Royal Festival Hall, in London, and other outlets ranging from Groucho Club, London, to The Rock hotel restaurant in Gibraltar.

The *Egon Ronay Guide* says that the practice is a disgrace, although not illegal, and states that all restaurants should provide fresh tap water for free as a matter of course.

Bottled mineral water is also being sold at exaggerated prices, sometimes as much as £7.50 a bottle, an investigation by the BBC has found.

Egon Ronay described this practice as "highway robbery".

He added: "This water pricing is a logical consequence of the warped wine pricing policy that exists in Britain – which is totally idiotic and counter-productive.

"The percentage mark-up on wine is so high that customers are prevented from buying good wine. But London water is poor quality to taste. It is important to have good water with one's food."

A spokesman for the Restaurateurs' Association said last night that in some circumstances the high prices restaurants charged for water are justified. "The margin that we place on mineral water often has to be higher than on other products," he said.

The spokesman added: "People are drinking less alcohol than they did four or five years ago – especially at lunchtime – and we have to make an additional profit in order to cover our costs."

The row over the water is featured tonight on BBC2's *Food and Drink* programme.

However, John Shirley-Bevan, the managing director of Classic Crystal Sparkling Water which is based in Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire, said he was dubious about claims of a 1,000 per cent mark up on tap water.

"I don't know where they get that figure from," he said. "The other thing is that we do not dictate what our product should be sold for.

"It depends on the restaurant – whether they are a high turnover place with lots of covers in a night, or a one-cover evening with waiters in bow ties."

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section ONE
BUSINESS 20-22 COMMENT 18,19 CROSSWORD 28 GAZETTE 16
LAW REPORT 16 LEADING ARTICLES 18 LETTERS 18 NEWS 2-15
OBITUARIES 16 SHARES 23 SPORT 25-28 UNIT TRUSTS 24

section TWO
ARTS 8-11 CHESS 22 CROSSWORD 22 FASHION 12,13
HEALTH 4-7 LISTINGS 20,21 MEDIA 14-19
REVIEWS 10 TELEVISION & RADIO 27,28 WEATHER 25

news

IN BRIEF

Attorney General to rule on Child Z

In a case with crucial implications for the freedom of the press, the Attorney General has beeo asked to consider whether oewspapers are allowed to report a Commons Early Day Motion if it breaches a High Court injunction.

A blanket injunction was granted in March 1993 restraining the media from identifying or seeking information relating to a child, who can only be referred to as Z. Last year, however, the child's mother sought leave to allow her to publicise the treatment that her child is receiving at a specialised institution, and the Court of Appeal ruled that it was not in the child's interests for a film to be broadcast ideotifying her.

Teo days ago an MP put down an Early Day Motion which uamed the daughter. Several newspapers reported it and the Attorney General has beeo asked to consider whether they are in contempt of court.

Ashdown libel case

Paddy Ashdown announced yesterday that he is suing the Bristol-based *Western Daily Press* for libel. The Liberal Democrat leader, who has beeo the target of a hate campaign, said that published an "utterly disgraceful article". The subject of the allegations are matters which will be the subject of court proceedings later this week.

Charity scratchcards

Four leading charities – Age Concern, Cancer Research Campaign, Scope and the NSPCC – launched their own scratchcard in an attempt to make up the income shortfall they have suffered since the start of the National Lottery. Tickets are available at post offices.

Child bride's return

Sarah Cook, the 13-year-old child bride from Essex, left the Turkish village of Kahranmaras with her mother Jackie last night to await the first flight home. A Foreign Office spokesman said they were expected back "in the next 24 hours".

£1.4m damages

A boy who suffered catastrophic brain damage because of medical blunders was awarded £1.4m damages at the High Court in London. Barry Hawksford, now aged 13, was transferred to Aldershot's Cambridge Military Maternity Hospital soon after his premature birth in 1982, but staff failed to ventilate or monitor him properly, leading to oxygen starvation. The Ministry of Defence admitted liability.

Fat cat sacked

A cat kept by a hospital to sit on patients' laps as part of their therapy needs a new home because it has become too fat. The cat, named Marmite, weighs 2 stone – three times the weight of the average family cat – and Knowle Hospital, near Southampton, says patients are finding the animal too heavy.

Correction

A quotation was attributed in the *Independent* yesterday to John Ward MP. Mr Ward did oot use those words, nor do they represent his views.

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Lobbyist eases his way into the corridors of power

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

Commons access: Row over prized passes shows how advisers hope to gain influence for clients

Barry Joseph is well-known in the defence lobbying industry. Operating as a one-man band, he gives an office address in Lamb Street, near Liverpool Street station in the City.

Clients include British Aerospace, Racal and Rolls-Royce, who are currently hidding for billion-pound government contracts.

As a parliamentary adviser, Mr Joseph would be expected to brief the companies oo developments at Westminster likely to affect their businesses, to keep them informed of intelligence gleaned from ministers, officials and political journalists and to press their case.

A key part of a lobbyist's work is gaining access to ministers and MPs able to influence key decisions. Having eotry to the Commons and being able to rub shoulders with ministers, MPs and journalists would be a key selling-point for any political adviser.

This is oot the first time the system of granting Commons passes has been questioned. People applying for passes are security-vetted by the office of the Serjeant-at-Arms. In 1987, a research assistant to a left-wing Labour MP had his pass withdrawn for being a suspected IRA sympathiser.

In 1989, Pamela Bordes, a former model, was found to have a research assistant's pass provided by a Tory MP and Dale Campbell-Savours, MP for Workington, complained security passes were being handed round "like confetti".

A Tory MP last year withdrew his research assistant's pass after he was charged with distributing paedophile literature.

Racal is part of a consortium competing for the £2bn defence field telecommunications order, expected to be announced this summer. A Racal spokesman said that Mr Joseph was "retained as a parliamentary communications consultant. He is a consultant to us as he is to other people".

Asked if Mr Joseph was working on the field telecoms order, the Racal spokesman replied: "DFTS is a project we're bidding for. Barry Joseph is aware of that as an adviser to us." The Racal spokesman said that as far as he knew, Mr Joseph operated from the Commons. "He works for himself in the House of Commons."

British Aerospace was advised by Mr Joseph on last year's ferocious contest for the new army attack helicopter. BAe is now pitching for three Government missile orders, together worth £2bn. A BAe spokesman said that Mr Joseph was employed as "an overall consultant."

In the register of interests of MPs' research assistants Mr Joseph declares "occasional work for BAe and Rolls-Royce".

New knife curb to ban sale to under-16s

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

People aged under 16 are to be banned from buying knives, the Government has decided.

The move is part of the clampdown on what police believe is a growing knife culture in Britain – highlighted by the stabbing to death of London headmaster Philip Lawrence.

New laws to ban the sale of knives will be added to the Offensive Weapons Bill, which has all-party backing and is currently going through Parliament.

The Government is expected to announce the change on Friday.

Once the Bill becomes law it will be illegal for shopkeepers to sell knives to under 16-year-olds. They are already barred from selling cigarettes and glue to youngsters. At present there are no age restrictions on buying knives.

Kitchen knives, daggers, combat-style blades, and "survival" weapons are among those expected to be covered under the new regulations. Ministers still have to decide on the wording of the new legislation and whether all knives will come under the ban. The changes will be added as amendments to the Bill in the next few weeks.

It is understood that the Home Office would also like to introduce restrictions on the sale and advertisements of knives via mail order catalogues, however this appears unlikely because of the difficulties in enforcing any new laws.

Tim Kirkhope, Home Office Minister, has already spoken out against children buying "razor-sharp kitchen knives or commando-style daggers".

The Offensive Weapons Bill, which is to be renamed, will increase the maximum penalty from six months to a two-year jail sentence or an unlimited fine for carrying a knife without good reason. The maximum sentence for carrying an offensive weapon such as a cosh or knuckle duster would also go up from two to four years.

There has been increasing concern about the growing availability of knives and the apparent increasing willingness of people to use them during attacks.

More than 37,000 knives were surrendered last month in an amnesty in Eogland and Wales. Of the 677 murders in this country in 1994, 236 were stabbings.

The Bill, which was introduced by Conservative MP Lady Olga Maitland, was brought in the wake of the fatal stabbing of Mr Lawrence, who was murdered outside his school.

The Association of Chief Police Officers supports a ban on the sale of knives to children, although there is concern about the practicalities of trying to enforce the law.

Last month Sir Paul Condon, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, told the Home Affairs Select Committee that he would welcome any restriction on the sale of knives to young people.

"There is a growing willingness by young people to carry knives... as part of a street culture," he said.

In 1985 London saw a peak of 2,758 knife offences committed by adults and young people. By1993 the figure had fallen to 2,332 but last year the authorities saw it rise again to 2,550.

Focus of devotinn: Restorer Hamish Dewar examines the *Light of the World*, a Victorian masterpiece by William Holman Hunt, at Christie's yesterday; it will be returned to St Paul's Cathedral later this year Photograph: Edward Sykes

MPs to face 'fast track' scrutiny over pay

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

The Senior Salaries Review Board – the body which fixes the pay of the most senior civil servants – is expected to carry out a fast-track inquiry into the sensitive issue of MPs' pay, in time to report this June.

Negotiations between the main political parties were being finalised last night, ahead of an expected announcement today that the issue will be examined by the board, which already has a remit to report on parliamentary pay.

In a concession to more than 300 MPs, of all parties, who wanted Lord Nolan's committee on standards in public life to investigate the issue, the terms of reference are expected to allow for the board to consult with Lord Nolan on how pay could be affected by the new curbs on outside interests approved by the Commons last year.

The inquiry will cover not only salaries (currently £34,000 a year) but also secretarial and office allowances (currently £42,754 a year) and pensions. In addition, it will cover ministerial salaries in the light ofcomplaints that they are underpaid, especially after having £10,000 of their MP's salary "docked" in measure taken by Lady Thatcher when she was Prime Minister. the issue of ministers' pay was highlighted by the unexpected resignation of Tim Eggar, the Minister of State for energy, who is to pursue a career in the private sector.

The use of the Senior Salaries Review Board will excite expectations among some MPs that they could be lifted into a new salary league. Previously, MPs were linked to Grade 6 of the civil service, but the Review Board covers only Grades above Grade 5 – paid around £10,000 a year more than the old Grade Six.

An early report – before the general election and probably before the summer recess – would mean that outgoing MPs, many of whom have signed the Early Day Motion, would benefit from any improvement in pension arrangements.

Leaders of all parties have apparently agreed to get the announcement on MPs out of the way before Thursday's announcement of next year's pay awards for over 1.3m public sector workers. These are expected to be about four per cent.

Meanwhile, anger has surfaced among MPs at the adverse publicity given to suggestions that some could be seeking to double their salaries. In response to a question from Bob Parry, the left-wing Labour MP for Liverpool Riverside, Tony Newton, Leader of the Commons, said he had no plans to require lobby journalists to declare "their salaries, employers' pension contributions, and allowances" in return for retaining Commons accreditation.

Fraud poses serious threat to London rail line sell-off

FROM PAGE ONE

from one station to another in order to boost the share of LTS's income. Tickets issued at Fenchurch Street were sold at Upminster because LTS gets a greater proportion of the reveoue from Travelcard sales, which has to be shared with London Transport. Yesterday it emerged that there were plans to extend the scheme to Barking, which, would have resulted in doubling the extra annual revenue to over £1m.

There were also signs that the City hackers of the team – the veoture capital groups Gresham Trust and 3i – might withdraw should the investigations being carried out by BR and by the Rail Regulator, John Swift QC, reveal that the fraud was known about widely in the company. A spokesman for 3i said: "We are waiting for the outcome of the investigations."

A City source said: "This is the last thing that a company like 3i wants. They are very careful about investing in companies with ethical managemeot teams. They would never, for example, back an individual nursing home through fear that abuse allegations may be raised. And they hate getting their names in the papers over something like this."

British Rail is investigating why the LTS management did oot know about the fraud which had netted £45,000 over a six-week period. A BR source told the *Independent*: "There were monthly meetings to discuss the finances of the company and the figures must have shown that extra revenue was coming in from Travelcard income." He pointed out that at least 30 ticket clerks and other staff must have known of the fraud.

LT managers are extremely worried about the incident because Travelcard tickets are sold throughout the BR network and LT has dealings with all 25 Train Operating Companoies. They say that similar frauds could arise in other parts of rail network, particularly in Loodoo.

FCO's top woman to join former boss at NatWest

POLLY TOYNBEE

Dame Pauline Neville-Jones, until recently second highest official in the Foreign Office and the Prime Minister's chief foreign affairs adviser, is leaving to join NatWest Markets, the investment banking arm of NatWest Group. Although it has not yet been publicly announced, she will be joining her former Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd.

He has been a director of the bank and deputy chairman of NatWest Markets since October, with a salary of £250,000 for a two-day week, "providing services of a promotional or ambassadorial nature". As final arrangements for her move have not been completed, details of Dame Pauline's new job have yet to be revealed.

The move follows a rancorous dispute in the upper echelons of the Foreign Office. Dame Pauline, 56, was expected to be made ambassador to Paris, having recently left the position of Political Director, number two to the permaneot Under Secretary, Sir John Coles. The Paris embassy is traditionally given to the most senior official as a last post before compulsory retirement at 60.

Friends of Dame Pauline say she was unfairly treated by the Foreign Office, cheated of this last honour after a distinguished career. She was passed over by Michael Jay, a man six years her junior. She is the highest ranking woman ever in the Foreign Office, a department that lags behind the rest in promoting womeo. Only 1 per cent of the top three grades at the Foreign Office are women, far fewer than the average for all Whitehall departments, where women hold 8.5 per cent of top posts.

Promoted to Political Director by the Prime Minister in 1994, Dame Pauline travelled with him oo foreign trips and was his chief foreign affairs adviser. She was also Britain's chief negotiator on Bosnia, and signatory to the peace accords signed at Dayton, Ohio.

News analysis, page 17

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Man dies as snow brings chaos

PETER VICTOR

Blizzard conditions caused chaos on the roads in Scotland and Wales yesterday with drifts up to 12 inches deep, leading to at least one death, and snow is expected to spread across Britain today.

Slippery roads and poor visibility made driving hazardous north of the border and mountain passes in Scotland and Wales have been closed.

A postman was killed in a road crash in heavy snow as blizzards swept across parts of Wales. Andrew John, 30, died in the crash between his van and a four-wheel-drive jeep on the A40 near Haverfordwest, Dyfed, as up to eight inches of snow fell across the region.

The worst-affected region was Dumfries and Galloway, where AA Roadwatch described the roads as "extremely treacherous" and police have advised motorists only to make journeys that are necessary.

More than 100 Scottish schools were closed because of the deteriorating weather. In South Wales, thousands of pupils were sent home early as blizzards swept the region.

Mid-Glamorgan was reported to be worst affected with snow shutting all schools in the Rhondda Valley. By midday yesterday, several roads in the Scottish Grampian mountains: the Horseshoe Pass in Clwyd, and the Rhigos, Bwlch, Maerdy and Llanwonno mountain roads in Mid-Glamorgan were impassible. More routes across Scotland, Wales and Cumbria were expected to be cut off last night as conditions worsened over the evening. Minor roads throughout the North and West and the Midlands became icy, making driving very difficult. Many rural roads in parts of Dyfed, Powys and Clwyd were also hit by snow piled up by strong winds.

Weathermen warned that up to eight inches of snow on high ground was expected overnight. A London Weather Centre forecaster said: "With strong southerly and south-easterly winds, there will be drifting and blizzard conditions in the mountains. The snow is going to move east across almost all of England and Wales, though it may not reach East Anglia. Coastal areas in the South and West will see rain rather than snow. "It will not be particularly cold – around freezing in most places – but there will be stro winds, making it feel a lot col er than it is," the forecaster sa

While it will be wintry a cold for the rest of the week, t storms are expected to ha blown themselves out by toda

Winter wonderland: A flock of wild geese search for a landing strip to feed after heavy snow fell in Scotland yesterday, leaving some roads, particularly in the mountain regions, impassible

Tariffs slashed in new mobile phone battle

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

Cellnet yesterday stepped up a price war in the mobile phones business by introducing new tariffs that it claimed would reduce charges to customers by as much as 30 per cent.

The move is part of a battle for market share among the fast-growing operators of digital mobile phones, prompted by the rapid growth of Orange over the last two years.

Cellnet, one of the first two companies in the field, operates both the older analogue phones and the more secure and better quality digital phones which are sweeping the market for new users.

Following aggressive new tariffs introduced recently by Orange, Cellnet said it was cutting its digital tariffs, increasing the length of off-peak periods and replacing charges by the minute with one second charging. Payment by the second allows customers to keep costs down by making brief calls.

Cellnet and its rival Vodaphone dominate the mobile phone market but have far more analogue than digital customers.

Orange, which sells only digital phones, claims only 7 per cent of the total market but said last month that it was winning 30 per cent of the 100,000 new digital customers who come into the market every month.

Orange also said that there were now twice as many new customers for digital phones in the UK as a whole every month as for analogue equipment.

The claims were made when the company, owned by Hutchison Whampoa, the Hong Kong conglomerate, and British Aerospace, announced a £2.8bn stock market flotation.

The decision to raise money on the stock market is thought to be one of the factors behind the aggressive marketing campaigns that are now bringing a drop in costs for all users.

Howard Ford, the managing director of Cellnet, said: "Today's announcement is good news for Cellnet's customers and those considering a mobile phone, and had news for our competitors who assumed they could compete on price alone."

One-second billing is to be applied to digital phone calls, where all peak-time calls are to be reduced by 5p a minute. Off-peak calls for medium level users are similarly reduced.

The Call Saver monthly subscription is to be reduced by £5 for high users, who will also benefit from an extra 24 hours a week of off-peak periods.

The changes, from 1 March, also allow low-usage analogue users to switch to digital, at no extra charge.

Stone points to Buddha's birth site

TIM MCGIRK
New Delhi

For centuries, pilgrims searching the Himalayan foothills for the birthplace of Lord Buddha were sent in two contrary directions: India and Nepal. But now the dispute over where the Buddha was born 2,000 years ago may have been solved.

Archaeologists have discovered a stone which marks the Buddha's birthplace under an ancient temple in south-western Nepal.

Archaeologists from Nepal, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Japan unearthed the evidence nine months ago, but the Nepali authorities delayed making the announcement until more experts had been consulted. Nepal's Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, said on Sunday: "The discovery proves that Lord Buddha was born at this sacred place."

Relics were excavated from a chamber 16ft under the Mayadevi temple in Lumbini, 200 miles south-west of Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, which archaeologists say proves that this was where Buddha was born.

Buddhism has 300 million followers around the world, mainly in Asia, who know by heart the story of how Buddha was born while his mother, Queen Mayadevi, was travelling towards her parents' home in Rangram, located in Nepal's Nawalparasi district, when she felt birth pains. Passing through Lumbini, she went into labour, bathed in a sacred pond and then walked 25 paces into a grove of trees to deliver her child. Buddhists believe that the baby sprang out and miraculously took seven steps.

Nepali officials claim that a commemorative stone was found exactly 25 steps from the pond. Lok Darsban Bajracharya, former chairman of the Lumbini Development Trust, said: "It proves the authenticity of the descriptions given in Buddhist literature and religious texts about the exact spot where the Lord was born."

Some scholars, however, had insisted that Buddha was born across the Indian border in what is now the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh state. Buddhists believe that Buddha, or Prince Siddhartha Gautama as he was known, was destined by soothsayers to become either a great ruler or, if he were to witness great suffering, a religious leader.

His princely father wanted him to become a conqueror and tried to shield his son from life's ills. But the young prince slipped out of the palace one day and realised for the first time the reality of suffering, old age, sickness and death. Aged 29, he renounced his family and fled his palace. As a wandering beggar, he searched far and long for the truth, and most of the places where he gave his sermons are located in what is now India.

The stone marking the Buddha's birthplace in Lumbini was found atop a layered brick platform dating back to the era of Emperor Ashoka, who visited Lumbini nearly 400 years after Queen Maya walked from the sacred pond into the forest and delivered her son.

Hotels warned over Euro 96 'profiteering'

CLARE GARNER

Hoteliers who have hiked up their prices to make a fast buck out of the Euro 96 soccer tournament are being investigated by the Football Association.

English officials have launched an inquiry into how hotels in cities hosting this summer's sporting event have inflated their prices - sometimes by as much as four times the "rack rates". One city centre hotel which normally charges £40 for a night of bed and breakfast is reportedly asking £160 for the same room - without breakfast.

Host cities - London, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Newcastle, Nottingham and Liverpool - are expecting as many as 250,000 visitors from the 16 qualifying countries, generating up to £118m in tourism revenue during the three-week tournament. But the FA fears the mega-inflationary rates will mean hoteliers prove to be the ultimate losers.

Manchester alone is expecting 50,000 visitors – but the city has only 28,000 beds. Not surprisingly, it is emerging as o of the most expensive ho cities. Its Britannia Hotel charging £180 for a doub room and £140 for a sing compared to the published t iffs, posted at reception, £105 and £75 respectively, a the Holiday Inn Crowne Pla is charging £150 for a doub room instead of the rack rate £120.

David Davies, the FA's rector of public affairs, pealed to hoteliers to rethi "What we are seeking is a fo hall festival that reflects no ing but credit on this coun Frankly, hotels which exploit guests are letting everyo down," he said yesterday.

Michele Aboody, Natio Accounts Manager for M chester's Britannia Hotel, fended the hotel's decision. a company we fluctuate rates depending on supply demand, obviously."

Mr Davies said such a tudes by hotels could hav serious effect on shops, rest rants, theatres and other am ties, as visitors would not in the cities as long.

Professor aims to give cosmetic surgery a new complexion

GLENDA COOPER

In a world which has created a "new cosmetic underclass", plastic surgery should have the same moral value as treating heart disease, Britain's first professor of plastic surgery said yesterday.

Presenting the inaugural Medical Journalists' Association/Action Research Lecture, Professor Angus McGrouther said it was time to question labels such as "morally worthy" cosmetic surgery (for burns victims) and "morally unworthy" surgery (seen as pandering to people's vanity).

Two million people in Britain have some form of disfigurement and research suggests that plastic surgery can dramatically improve the quality of their lives.

"I have seen three people in my clinic today who came in with stories of abuse from strangers for no reason other than they have a physical deformity," said Professor McGrouther. "It is a strange idea that we put values on treatment of different things. We see it as a good thing to treat cancer or accidents but we're not quite sure about disfigurement.

"We should be looking at whether we can help people with treatment rather than whether or not it is worthy. Someone with heart disease could have been a heavy smoker, but someone with a disfigurement has no control over that. We have got curious values. It's too simplistic to classify it as life-threatening or not." He said that he deplored the "supermodel culture of the 1990s" which was obsessed with idealised body images, causing those who could not measure up to lock themselves away. There was nothing new about the power of body image, he added – after all, Helen of Troy had launched a thousand ships with her face – but that film, TV and advertising industries had given it a sharp new definition.

"It is society at large which needs treatment. We need to adjust our views about body image. Disfigurement is the last bastion of discrimination.

"We always used to have beautiful icons to look at but now there is encouragement to imitate those icons," he said.

"We're much less tolerant about the way people look. This is true of all walks of life. It's questionable as to whether Winston Churchill, or even Harold Wilson, who was also on the rotund side, would have been electable today."

It was no surprise that the Princess of Wales had been treated more sympathetically than the buxom Duchess of York.

"Until her recent appearance on *Panorama* on BBC1, most of the public had little idea about the way Diana spoke or about her intellect. Until then we had only heard a few soundbites. We'd only had one criterion by which we could judge her directly: her body image."

Research in Oxford had shown that breast reduction surgery could have a dramatic effect on the quality of life. moving a tattoo from a yo man's face could help him a job and support his wife family.

The professor went on warn about the limits of surg

Reports about Michael Ja son bad created a misleac impression. Cosmetic surg had helped to build up a li white, half-black, half-el half-adult, half-male, hal male image. "Most of the cedures he appears to h had have a limited lifespan example, the nasal reconst tion he's had is notorious fo quiring additional mult grafts over the years – a kin chronic maintenance polic

It's all in the image: Professor Angus McGrouther, Helen of Troy and Michael Jackson

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news

Scott to deliver findings amid total secrecy

DONALD MACINTYRE
and DAVID HELLIER

The potentially explosive arms to Iraq report of Sir Richard Scott will be given to the Government this week in conditions of unparalleled secrecy, after intense negotiations between Whitehall and the Scott inquiry team.

A strictly limited number of copies will be sent on a "need to know" basis only to some Cabinet ministers and a small group of senior officials charged with drawing up the Government's response – to be unveiled in a Commons statement on Thursday week by Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade.

The Government has agreed to the stipulation that all advance copies – thought to be upwards of 20 – will not only be numbered, but also sent to named recipients and that none of them will be photocopied for wider distribution in Whitehall.

Meanwhile, the judge, speaking in an interview to be screened on Channel 4's *Dispatches* programme on Wednesday evening, the day the Government is due to receive a final draft, robustly defends the way he has conducted his inquiry, suggesting that "party political concerns" will influence reactions to it.

Sir Richard's remarks follow criticism from Government supporters such as Lord Howe and Sir Bernard Ingham, Baroness Thatcher's former press spokesman, and are sure to inflame the public row over the merit of the inquiry ahead of its publication next week.

He says: "It would be naive to believe that they [people's conclusions] will not be affected to some extent by party political concerns, particularly being so near an election. That's going to happen. It's rather a fact of life. In a way I regret it, but we live in the real world."

The judge adds: "Criticism in advance of reading the report has got to be worthless and I hope the public will realise that."

Later on he makes a reference to his foremost critics and without naming them says: "The people who have uttered these criticisms weren't on my Christmas card list anyway and they're not about to go on it."

Sir Richard's critics have argued that they do not believe his investigation should have been run on inquisitorial lines. Some of them have argued that interviewees should have been given the option of taking legal representation with them to the oral hearings.

But Sir Richard says: "I'm not quite sure whether one could have had an inquiry if it wasn't inquisitorial ... the important requirement is that the procedure is should be fair to all persons who are involved in the proceedings.

"If it had been necessary for there to be cross-examination conducted by lawyers on behalf of clients then that could have been provided for, but I simply don't agree that is an essential requirement in every case."

His report had taken more than three years to complete partly because he had to go a large number of witnesses to get evidence, both oral and written. He also went through a long process of giving witnesses provisional criticisms which they could respond to.

Sir Richard, who has been described by some Government supporters as something of a "maverick" and egotist, described himself during the interview as a "part of the establishment".

He said: "I think every judge is a member of the establishment."

Axe to grind: Firemen demonstrating outside the Department of the Environment, London, yesterday — Photograph: Geraint Lewis

Firefighters to be balloted over job cuts

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

Firefighters' leaders have authorised strike ballots in London, Essex, Surrey and Tyne and Wear, all of which are threatened with massive job cuts.

Senior officials at the Fire Brigades Union yesterday warned that if management proceeded with planned redundancies in the four areas, their members would vote overwhelmingly to walk out.

The news emerged yesterday as strike leaders from Merseyside continued talks with officials at the conciliation service Acas. Firefighters in the Liverpool area have staged more than 30 stoppages since last August in protest at cutbacks.

Dave Higgs, a national official of the union, said London faced "devastating" cuts with a £9m reduction in the budget, which senior fire officers argue would inevitably mean loss of life. In a paper sent to the Home Secretary, London's chief fire officer has warned that the capital faces the loss of 640 fire fighters, the closure of four fire stations and the removal of 22 appliances.

More than 100 firefighters from London protested about threatened job cuts and station closures outside the Department of the Environment headquarters yesterday, handing in a 120,000 name petition. Another demonstration will be held on 22 February, when the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority meets to discuss its budget.

■ Colleagues yesterday paid a silent tribute to Fleur Lombard, 21, the first woman to die in Britain's fire service. Members of her blue watch from the Speedwell fire station, Bristol, laid floral tributes on charred debris in the supermarket where she lost her life fighting a blaze and trying to see if the building was clear of customers.

The 12 men of the watch stood for a moment in silence bare-headed in the biting cold outside the main entrance of the Co-op store in Broad Street, Staple Hill.

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Malaria drug users go to court over side effects

IAN MacKINNON

Lawyers acting for more than 100 people who have suffered severe side effects which they are convinced were caused by a leading antimalarial drug have applied for legal aid to sue the manufacturers.

Sufferers have complained that the mefloquine drug Lariam, prescribed by their GPs, caused symptoms so extreme that some have been unable to work for almost a year after they finished the course of tablets.

Little hard evidence exists to link the side effects to the drug, made by the Swiss pharmaceutical giant Hoffman-La Roche, but doctors say the anecdotal evidence is overwhelming and have called for a large-scale independent study.

The company recognises that Lariam, acknowledged as the strongest and most effective antimalarial drug, can cause severe side effects which can be fatal, but argue the risks are extremely low – as few as one in 10,000.

But growing numbers of Britons who have taken Lariam – used as some strains of malaria have become resistant to drugs such as chloroquine – have reported the symptoms first highlighted in the BBC *Watchdog* programme.

Dr Gordon Cook, at the Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London, has seen many patients who believe it has induced seizures, epileptic fits, manic depression and panic attacks.

"I am quite clear that these problems are common and of major significance," he said. "So much so that people are not taking the Lariam and leaving themselves open to ... malaria."

One of those who claims to have suffered and become involved in the "legal class action" is Stuart Waddell, 33, from Coventry, who has not been able to work since last April.

He took Lariam before going on a business trip to Malaysia and was affected even before he left home.

"I came over in this terrible, sweaty condition. My heart started racing and I felt nauseous ... it took me 30 minutes to get a grip of myself," he said.

The symptoms continued when he returned home. "I went to work, but only stayed for three hours," said Mr Waddell, who has four children. "I was a totally different person. I used to be self-confident, easily able to deal with pressure situations. I told my wife I thought I was going mad."

Christiane Gaoziou, the solicitor acting for the complainants, said she was confident the group would be given legal aid.

However, a spokesman for the Department of Health said any risks from Lariam were still considered extremely low.

Hoffman-La Roche said it constantly reviewed Lariam's performance but had discovered no changes in the side effects it caused.

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Cervical cancer: Hospital has 70,000 slides rechecked as doctors admit 700 patients may have been wrongly given all clear

Women flood helpline after smear blunder

GLENDA COOPER

Nearly 1,000 women telephoned an emergency helpline yesterday after senior hospital staff admitted that up to 700 women may have been wrongly told their cervical smear tests were negative.

Around 70,000 women, who were screened at Kent and Canterbury Hospital, will have their most recent tests rechecked after staff revealed they had discovered a mistake in the screening process during a routine audit last September.

All 70,000 hospital slides are being sent to screening centres at Manchester and Birmingham and it will be months before the rechecking results are known.

Kate Neales, a consultant gynaecologist, said: "What we did was look at a group of women who had a positive smear and we then went back and looked at their previous smear tests which had been reported as negative. When this retrospective check was undertaken it was possible to identify abnormal cells on some of those previous smear tests."

This meant that some women could have been identified earlier as having an abnormality. Samples of almost 11,000 smear tests were sent away to separate laboratories and of those 89 were found to be positive.

The smear test, in which cells from the cervix are analysed, does not detect cancer, but detects whether there are any potential problems which require further investigation. Early detection of pre-cancerous cells leads to early treatment and survival rates of around 80 per cent.

Women aged 20 to 64 are invited to have a smear test at least once every five years. The Cervical Screening Programme, set up in 1988 and costing £100m a year, was the first of its kind in Europe and nationally eight out of 10 women now have regular smear tests.

Recent figures showed that the number of cervical cancer deaths is falling, from 1,485 in 1993 to 1,369 in 1994. The cancer screening programme estimates the death rate is falling by 7 per cent each year.

But there have been a number of incidents where results have been mistaken and last year 2,000 patients had their records recalled after it emerged that a radiotherapy machine at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, had been used on the wrong setting for 17 years.

Ann Farebrother, consultant in public health medicine for East Kent Health Authority which covers the Kent and Canterbury Hospital, said: "No screening programme is 100 per cent accurate. The success rate of picking up abnormal smears is between 85 to 95 per cent."

Edward Pearson, chief executive of the hospital trust, who described the mix-up as a "high profile and emotional issue", said he did not know how much the re-testing was likely to cost.

He said that all the women concerned would be written to over the next two weeks informing them of the review.

■ Women in the Canterbury and Thanet area who had smear tests between 1990 and 1995 can ring the helpline on 01227 766016.

Under the microscope: The cytology unit at Kent and Canterbury Hospital where there has been an error in smear tests Photograph: Edward Webb

Scottish Office to 'give away' crofts to tenants

JOHN ARLIDGE

The Government is to "give away" Scottish crofts. Michael Forsyth, the Secretary of State for Scotland, yesterday unveiled plans to hand over 100,000 hectares of government-owned crofting land to local people.

The move is part of Mr Forsyth's effort to use "administrative devolution" – transferring powers from the Scottish Office to local communities – to combat Labour's plans for legislative devolution north of the border. Locals will take over the first government-owned croft later this year.

Addressing the Commons Grand Committee of Scottish MPs in the Highland capital of Inverness yesterday, Mr Forsyth said that when he took office last July he was astonished to find he was Scotland's largest crofting landlord. The Scottish Office took over 14 million acres of land, including 95 crofting estates, at the end of the First World War to provide work for returning soldiers.

"I found I had over 100,000 hectares of land and 1,400 croft holdings," he said. He then announced plans to hand over the land to crofters to improve its management and productivity.

Local people could run the crofts "better than a government department which, with the best will in the world, cannot be as sensitive to a community's needs and priorities as those who actually live there". Quoting the unofficial Scottish national anthem, *Flower of Scotland*, Mr Forsyth said the initiative would enable crofters to secure their "wee bit hill and glen".

Ministers were so committed to the project that some estates could be handed over free. "We have a duty to the taxpayer but it may be that in some cases viability will be best secured by giving away some crofts," he said.

In recent years Scotland's 10,000 crofters have begun to take control of their smallholdings, angered by private landowners' reluctance to invest in "marginal" plots. Crofters in Sutherland, Skye and Knoydart have led moves towards community buyouts. Yesterday the Crofters' Commission welcomed Mr Forsyth's announcement as "the opening chapter in a new era for crofting which offers remote rural communities radically new opportunities for security and sustainability which could help arrest the long, slow decline of fortunes in the Highlands and Islands".

DAILY POEM

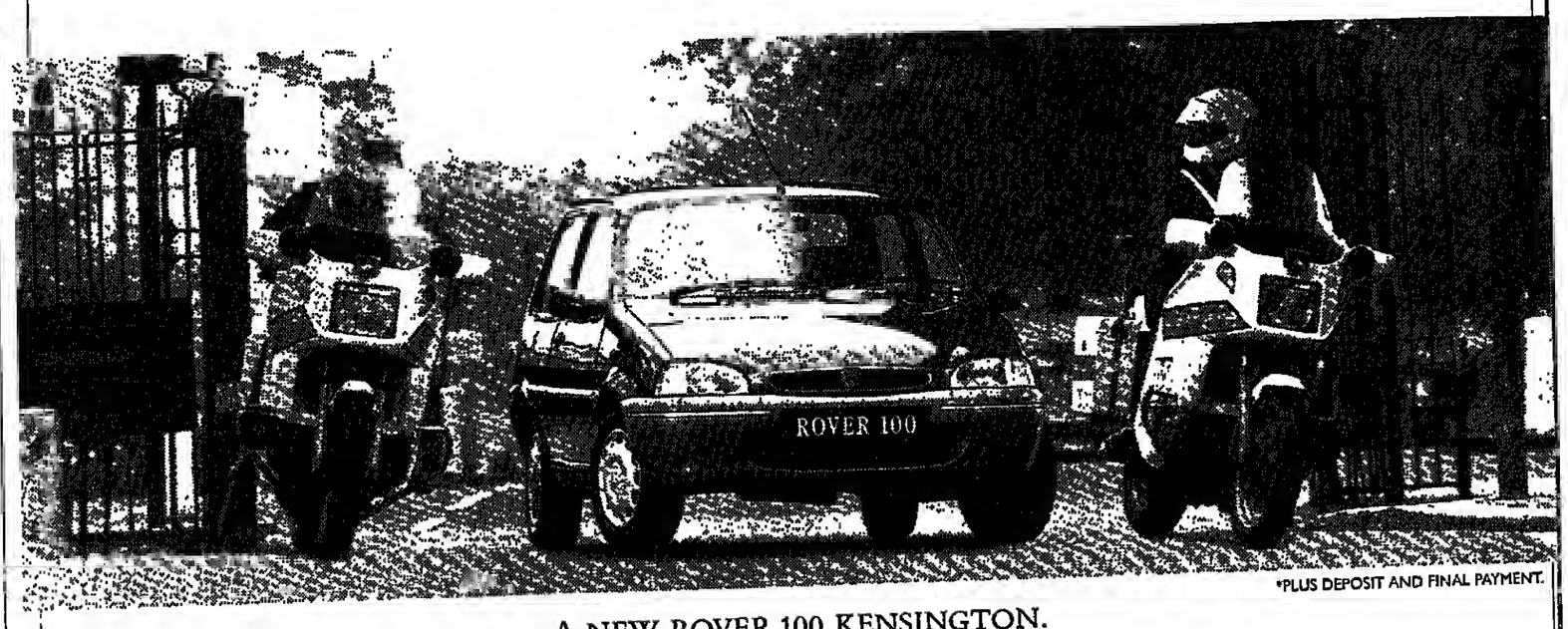
A Small Town in the Sudan

By Ian Pople

There is an autumn in the heat.
Yesterday she cut his hair in the garden,
and the hair and small leaves spiralled
over the sand. In the sunset a dog
moves from heat to heat among the refuse
on a corrugated roof as she comes
from the shower wrapped in a towel
and shaking her thin wet hair.

Tonight slender girls will pass their house.
Round their heads the gaudy scarves
of black and gold, of orange and brown,
and on their heads the wicker trays.
One of them will stop outside the house
and sit beside a hurricane lamp
to winnow peanuts. He thinks that she
will do this for forty years, and that
already she will have some particular way
of twisting paper funnels, of flicking
peanuts so the least amount is lost.
His wife will dry her hair and go out
past card players under the tree –
they look up and straighten their white emmas,
their white jellabias – and she will give
the smiling girl crumpled money.

Ian Pople was born in Ipswich and educated at the British Council, Athens, and Aston and Manchester universities. He is a teacher by profession and has taught English in secondary schools and universities in Sudan, Greece, Saudi Arabia and Britain, while contributing poetry frequently to the *Times Literary Supplement*, *London Review of Books* and *Poetry Review*. This poem, the first of four parts of "A Small Town in the Sudan", is taken from *The Glass Encounter* (Arc, £5.95), a Poetry Book Society Recommendation, which has been praised by John Fuller for its ability to "accumulate telling details like the montage of documentary film".



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news

School report: Cramped and short of books

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

More than 3,000 schools do not have enough books and an even greater number struggle to cope in inadequate buildings, the chief inspector of schools said yesterday. The finding, which follows last year's widespread protests over education funding, is bound to prove embarrassing to the Government.

In his annual report the chief inspector, Chris Woodhead, revealed that 2,700 primary and 1,000 secondary schools did not have enough books. A further 2,700 primary schools, one in seven of the total, and 800 secondaries, one in five, had poor accommodation.

Teachers were forced to work in cramped classrooms or to teach art or science in non-specialist classrooms, he said, and their work suffered as a result. "Teachers who lack proper resources or who work in poor buildings experience problems which at best frustrate and at worst defeat their best efforts to do a decent job," be said. Mr Woodhead's report described the figures as "disturbing" and promised an investigation into whether particular types of schools or areas of Britain were affected by the problems.

His report came as a survey of 77 local authorities by the Campaign for State Education, Case, revealed that one-quarter still had primary schools with outside lavatories.

Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, denied that a lack of resources was linked to low standards: "It is absolutely clear that the use made of resources is what is important. The report stresses the need for strong financial management and nearly two in five schools should be making better use of their resources."

Mr Woodhead also promised an investigation into mathematics teaching after his report revealed that 1 school in 6 was failing to teach the subject properly to children aged between 7 and 14. Inspectors also found too many 11-year-olds were counting on their fingers, could not use a ruler properly and were making wild estimations when trying to do sums. Inspectors plan to look at the methods used for teaching maths and the extent to which they prepare pupils both for further education and for work.

The majority of lessons were satisfactory or better but standards were at their lowest for pupils aged between 7 and 11. Four out of ten lessons for the under-fives were good or very good, but the figure dropped to less than a quarter for 7- and 8-year-olds, rising again to just over a quarter for 11-year-olds. The figures on standards have fluctuated in recent years without showing any clear trends. But the chief inspector's annual report a decade ago in 1985 said that standards were satisfactory or better in more than four-fifths of both primary and secondary schools.

This year's figure, which may not be comparable because of changes in the inspection process, shows that around 50 per cent of primary schools and two-thirds of secondary schools received favourable judgements.

However, Mr Woodhead said most teachers were confident in handling the national curriculum and that social and moral education was generally good, as were both vocational education and the teaching of children with special educational needs. Pupils achieved well in English in half of all primary schools and in three-fifths of secondary schools, though there was a dip in achievement between the ages of 7 and 14. However, he added, the identification of very good schools showed how wide the gap was between different institutions in similar socio-economic circumstances.

Key facts in the inspectors' report

- Of 203 schools commended for excellence, 24 are grammar schools and 35 have opted out.
- One-fifth of all lessons in primary schools and in the first three years of secondary schools are unsatisfactory.
- Half of all primary schools and 4 out of 10 secondary schools must do better.
- Inspectors found that 48,000 of the nation's 410,000 teachers were excellent, while 14,700 were poor.
- The teaching of reading is poor in 1 in 20 infant schools and 1 in 10 junior schools. Maths is taught well in 4 out of 10 primary schools and half of all secondary schools.

Classroom report: Parents attribute a case of excellence to 'discipline'

iolden years: Children at Bethune Park, Hull, are taught in an atmosphere of calm Photograph: Asadour Guzelian

Head with a 'driving vision'

ONATHAN FOSTER

omething remarkable struck laureen Mather in the chief inector's letter – tbe misplaced mmas and sloppy syntax.

The 57-year-old head teacher is a hawkish eye for detail, iich scans the classrooms of ethune Park primary, in Hull, critically as it did Ofsted's ofirmation of her school's xcellent" status.

Few parents or teachers diste that the school's achieveent owes much to the head's rsonal dynamism. "Her drig vision is responsible," said Rev Michael Hills, chairman the governors.

"She can be a bit abrasive. metimes she drives the teachs up the wall because she can be autocratic. But she wants the best for the children even when, in an area like this, many parents don't bave high expectations."

Bethune Park teaches 350 children from a blue-collar neighbourhood in west Hull. Its buildings, cheapskate 1960s single-storey blocks, are hardly an inspiration.

But inside, even the walls are startlingly lucid. Mrs Mather increased the budget for backing paper, ensuring the most vivid presentation possible for work, something the inspectors found very impressive during their visit in January last year.

"We spent a lot of money on the backing paper because displays are important, they show children that their work is valued, and that is of supreme importance," said Mrs Mather, the head since 1988.

The school's work mixes traditional rigour with contemporary emphasis on support staff and in-service training. Six classroom ancillaries support 14 teachers whose training has taken them on courses as far away as the National Gallery, in London.

The children sit informally, wearing casual claret and grey uniforms. The atmospbere is calm and quiet, but not cowed. The most promising children are given extra homework. Parents attribute many of Bethune Park's virtues to "discipline". For a group of volunteer parents helping yesterday, it meant clearly defined boundaries, children "knowing how far they can go" and teachers "kind in a determined way, ready to give extra help to children who need it".

"Mrs Mather can he an ogre," one mother said. "But she's good for the school and if there's any sort of problem she'll discuss it with you."

The school's immediate problem is space. The library and the technology room have been sacrificed to provide more classrooms. After Easter, Bethune Park will cross the threshold of overcrowding.

"Why is it that resources are poured into failing schools?" Mrs Mather said. "Why can't some of it make a little detour?"

And next time Ofsted comes to call, inspectors can look forward to lessons in grammar.

Outstandingly successful secondary schools

Secondary schools which have had excellent exam results [illegible] inspection report, as well as showing evidence of "adding value" [illegible] achievements and having outstanding extra-curricular activity.

School Location	LEA/County	Highlights
Alcester GS	Warwickshire	Drama and music
Altrincham GS for Girls, Bowdon	Trafford	Arts and charitable activities
Arden School	Solihull	Theatre musical and sports
Aylesbury GS	Bucks	Extra-curricular and charitable activities
Barton Court GS	Kent	Arts and sports
Camden School for Girls	London	Strong community links and charitable activities
Cape Cornwall School	Cornwall	Activities week and community links
Chelmsford High School	Essex	Sports, music environmental and charitable activities
Colyton GS, Colyton	Devon	Community links and outward bound scheme
Copthall School	Barnet	Activity weeks and charity work
Dartford GS	Kent	Sporting activities and international links
Dr Challoner's GS, Amersham	Bucks	Sports music and drama
Ecclesbourne School, Belper	Derbyshire	International cultural enrichment activities
Emmanuel City Technology College	Gateshead CTC	Links with industry
Harrogate GS	N Yorkshire	Charities week and 'Mini-School Enterprise' scheme
Heckmondwike GS	Kirklees	Community and charitable service
Invicta GS for Girls, Maidstone	Kent	Arts and sports
Kendrick Girls' GS, Reading	Berkshire	Exceptional extra-curricular activity
King Edward VI	Birmingham	Extra-curricular activities and business
Presdales School, Ware	Herts	Excellent local and international links
Queen Elizabeth's	Barnet	Outstanding extra-curricular provision
Ringmer Community [illegible]	East Sussex	Musical links with Glyndebourne
Royal Grammar School High Wycombe	Bucks	Neighbourhood engineers schemes and business challenge programme
Sir Henry Floyd GS, Aylesbury	Bucks	Young enterprise scheme and links with industry
St Thomas More Catholic High School, Crewe	Cheshire	Social and cultural activities
The Grammar School for Girls, Wilmington	Kent	Range of visits, field trips and lectures
The Henrietta Barnett School, Hampstead Garden Suburb	Barnet	Work experience exchange scheme in Europe
The King's School, Grantham	Lincolnshire	Links with industry and exchanges
The Liverpool Blue Coat School	Liverpool	Community and musical activities
The North Halifax GS	Calderdale	International links and exchanges
West Kirby GS for Girls	Wirral	International awareness and charity work
Westcliff High School for Boys	Essex	Sports music and drama

Excellent middle, primary and nursery schools

Schools which had [illegible]

Middle schools

School	Location
[illegible]	[illegible]
Aston [illegible] Middle School	[illegible]
Chalfont St Giles Middle School	[illegible]
Emmanuel Middle School	[illegible]
Gosforth Middle School	[illegible]
Lake Middle School	[illegible]
Moatfield Middle School	[illegible]
Nacton VC Middle School	[illegible]

Primary schools

School	Location
Alexandra Infant School	[illegible]
All Saints C of E Jnr [illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
Alvenstoke Infants School	[illegible]
Bare Trees Junior School	[illegible]
Beauclerc (Controlled) First School	[illegible]
Berkeley Infants School	[illegible]
Bethune Park Primary School	[illegible]
Bishop Wilton C of E Primary School	[illegible]
Bolling Road First School	[illegible]
Bolton County [illegible]	[illegible]
Branscombe [illegible]	[illegible]
Broad Lane C of E [illegible]	[illegible]
Bury C of [illegible]	[illegible]
Bushey Manor Junior Mixed School	[illegible]
Chalfont Kings GM Infants School	[illegible]
Christ the King Junior School	[illegible]
Common Road First School	[illegible]
Crofton Junior School	[illegible]
Grosshall Junior School	[illegible]
Crowlands Junior School	[illegible]
Dalton [illegible]	[illegible]
Dewpool [illegible]	[illegible]
Debden [illegible]	[illegible]
Devonian County Primary [illegible]	[illegible]
Edenthorpe [illegible]	[illegible]
Etching Hill Primary [illegible]	[illegible]
Flitwick Lower School	[illegible]
Front Street Primary School	[illegible]

School	Location
Gamston C of E (Aided) Primary School	[illegible]
Great Missenden C of E Combined School	[illegible]
Grendon C of E Primary School	[illegible]
Halfway Infant School	[illegible]
Hadford Manor County Primary	[illegible]
Hempshill Hall Primary School	[illegible]
High Farnley First School	[illegible]
Higher Bebington Junior School	[illegible]
Horbury St Peter C of E Junior School	[illegible]
Keston Junior School	[illegible]
Lady Boswell's C of E (Aided) Primary School	[illegible]
Langdale Infant School	[illegible]
Leckhampton C of E School	[illegible]
Lovington C of E School	[illegible]
Maltby Manor Infant School	[illegible]
Monkhouse Primary School	[illegible]
Morley Primary School	[illegible]
Nether Alderley County Primary School	[illegible]
North Kelsey Primary School	Lincoln
Gaidena Primary School	Prescot, St Helens
Oatlands Infant School	Harrogate, North Yorkshire
Old Hutton C of E School	Kendal, Cumbria
Pickering County Junior School	Pickering, North Yorkshire
Polebrook C of E Primary School	Peterborough
Richmond Hill First School	Sprotbrough, Doncaster
Riddings Infant School	Alfreton, Derbyshire
Roecliffe C of E Primary School	North Derbyshire
Rothwell Infant School	Kettering, Northamptonshire
Samuel Whites Infants School	Hanham, Avon
Sir Harold Jackson School	Sheffield
Snape County Primary School	Bedale, North Yorkshire
Southwark Infant School	Nottingham
Southwater Infant School	Horsham, West Sussex
St Bede's RC Infant School	Widnes, Cheshire
St Boniface RC Primary School	Salford, M7
St John's C of E Combined School	Princes Risborough, Bucks
St John's C of E Primary School	Sandown, Isle of Wight
St Mary's C of E Junior Mixed & Infant	Dollis Park, Finchley, Barnet
St Mary's RC Primary School	Beckenham, Bromley
St Winifred's RC Junior School	Lewisham, London
Sudbourne Primary School	Lambeth, London
Sutton-on-the-Forest Primary School	York, North Yorkshire
Westerton Junior and Infant School	West Ardsley, Leeds
Westfield Primary School	Cottingham, Humberside
Wimborne Infant School	Southsea, Hampshire
Woodlands Junior School	Tonbridge, Kent
Wortham Long Green School	Diss, Suffolk

Good and improving secondary schools

Secondary schools which have had very good inspection reports and are doing well in all areas of their work. Their exam results are not necessarily exceptional, but they may be achieving good results with pupils from deprived backgrounds.

School	Location
All Hallows RC Secondary School	Farnham, Surrey
Allerton Grange School	Leeds
Altrincham Boys' Grammar School	Bowdon, Trafford
Archbishop Blanch School	Liverpool
Archbishop Sancroft High School	Harleston, Norfolk
Backwell School	Bristol
Brookvale High School	Leicester
Central Foundation Girls' School	Tower Hamlets, London E3
Convent and Jesus & Mary GM High School	Brent, London NW10
Cranbourne Secondary School	Basingstoke, Hampshire
Gillingham School	Gillingham, Dorset
Guiseley School	Guiseley, Leeds
Hall Green Secondary School	Hall Green, Birmingham
Healing Comprehensive School	Grimsby, Humberside
Heart of England School	Coventry, Solihull
Helsby County High School	Warrington, Cheshire
Holmer Green Upper School	High Wycombe, Bucks
Holy Cross RC High School	Chorley, Lancs
Honiton Community College	Honiton, Devon
Ibstock Community College	Ibstock, Leicestershire
John F Kennedy RC School	Hemel Hempstead, Herts
La Sainte Union Convent School	Highgate, London, NW5
Lancaster Girls' Grammar School	Lancaster, Lancs
Levenshulme High School	Crossley Rd, Manchester
Lowton High School	Lowton, Wigan
Manhood Community College	Chichester, West Sussex
Minsthorpe High School & Community College	South Elmsall, West Sussex
Monkwearmouth School	Sunderland
Mount St Joseph School	Farnworth, Bolton
Newquay Tretherras School	Newquay, Cornwall
Notre Dame High School	Southwark, London
Oaklands Community School	Southampton
Pershore High School	Pershore, Hereford & Worcs.
Priory High School	Ormskirk, Lancs
Purbrook Park School	Waterlooville, Hampshire
Queen's Park County High School	Chester
Sacred Heart of Mary RC School	Upminster, Havering
Sandon High School	Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs
Sandringham School	St Albans, Herts
Sawston Village College	Cambridge
Sheldon School	Chippenham, Wilts
Sir Joseph Williamson's Maths School	Rochester, Kent
Smestow School	Castlecroft, Wolverhampton
St Edmund's Catholic School	Portsmouth
St Gabriel's RC High School	Bury
St Hilda's RC High School	Burnley, Lancs
St John Fisher RC High School	Beech Hill, Wigan
St Mark's RC Secondary school	Hounslow
St Mary's Catholic School	Bishops Stortford, Herts
St Mary's RC High School	Leyland, Lancs
St Patrick's RC High Sch	Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland
St Paul's RC Comprehensive School	Abbey Wood, London SE2
St Peter's C of E High School	Plymouth, Devon
St Peter's Collegiate School	Wolverhampton
St Thomas More School	Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex
Tadcaster Grammar School	Tadcaster, North Yorkshire
Teign School	Newton Abbot, Devon
The Abraham Darby	Telford, Shropshire
The Burgate School	Fordingbridge, Hampshire
The Castle School	Taunton, Somerset
The Grange School	Stourbridge, Dudley
The Grey Coat Hospital	Westminster, London, SW1
The Harvey Grammar School	Folkestone, Kent
The Hugh Christie School	Tonbridge, Kent
The Snaith School	Goole, Humberside
The Village College	Comberton, Cambridgeshire
Trinity C of E High School	Greenheys, Manchester
Weavers GM School	Wellingborough, Northants
William Howard School	Brampton, Cumbria
Worle School	Weston-super-Mare, Avon

Highly effective special schools

Special schools which performed exceptionally well in meeting their pupils' needs.

School	Location
Fountaindale School	Mansfield, Notts
Grangewood School	Eastcote, Hillingdon
Hindley Borsdane Brook School	Wigan
Northease Manor School	Lewes, East Sussex
Park Crescent	High Wycombe, Bucks
Pathfield School	Barnstaple, Devon
Pictor School	Sale, Trafford
Southall School	Telford, Shropshire
St Francis School	Lincoln
Woodlawn School	Whitley Bay, North Tyneside

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Backbencher's Bill targets sexually explicit girls' magazines

RIANNE MACDONALD
dia Correspondent

ually explicit teenage mag-
ıes will be obliged to print
intended age range of their
lership if a Bill introduced
the House of Commons to-
is successful.
he Bill, sponsored by Peter Luff, the Tory MP for Worcester, is the result of a decision to flick through the magazine he bought for his 10-year-nld daughter Rosie on holiday. Mr Luff, 40, was horrified to find that the problem pages of the pre-teen magazine *Shout* featured advice to a girl who had found pornographic pictures and letters from a man who wanted to "do it" with her mother under her parents' bed

"I didn't want my 10-year-old to be worried about marital infidelity," he said. "Putting the idea into their heads that even happily married couples might he sleeping around was, I thought, unhelpful."

The magazines Mr Luff is particularly targeting are *Sugar*, *It's Bliss!*, *Mizz*, *19*, and *More*. "I have learnt things from these magazines which even I did not know at my advanced age," the MP said yesterday. Some – which were read by girls as young as nine – described nral sex in detail, using language no oewspaper would print, he added. After studying them, he now believes *Shout* is relatively innocent.

Mr Luff is hringing his Private Member's Bill into the House under the 10-minute rule, which is more normally used as a platform for debate. It has two clauses. The first would nblige puhlishers of teenagers' magazines to print the lowest recommended reader age on the cover. The second would allow a body such as trading standards departments to fine those who did not. The Periodical (Protection of Children) Bill is heing supporeted by five Tory backbenchers, three Labour MPs, and a Liberal Democrat.

Last week the monthly magazine *Sugar*, which launched 15 months ago to a readership ranging from 13 tn 19, announced a 21 per cent increase in circulation since July. It now sells more than 318,000 copies.

The March issue includes a reader survey on sex and contraception which reveals that 42 per cent of its readers have lost their virginity. Of those, 74 per cent were under 16 at the time, while more than one-fifth were 13 or younger.

Only 26 per cent of those questioned were confident about refusing sex if they did not want tn have it.

Straw says courts are too soft

ICIA WYNN DAVIES
STEPHEN GOODWIN

criminal justice system is
soft on criminal defen-
s, Jack Straw, the shadow
e Secretary, said yesterday
g Labour's latest attack on
nnservatives' law and or-
ecord.
blishing an analysis of
g conviction rates in Eog-
ınd Wales as a proportion
corded instances nf six of
nost serious crimes, Mr
said: "I think there is no
t that the halance has
too far in favour nf the
dant."
also gave his unequivocal
ng to repeal of the so-
"50 per cent" rule, under
the Crown Prosecution
e must be satisfied that a
ction is more likely than
efore a case is put before
urts. The rule meant the
as "second-guessing what
urts should be doing", Mr
said. He called for a re-
the previous system, in
prosecutors had to be sat-
here was an arguable case
wer. "If you did that a lot
offenders would be like-
go to court and in my
nent a lot more would
being convicted as well."
Straw highlighted the in-
d acquittal rate in 1994 –
cent – compared with
7, when the CPS began
when it was 50 per cent.
ording to Mr Straw's
s, entitled *You're not safe
e Tories* and compiled
Home Office criminal
s, convictions and cau-
a percentage of recorded woundings nr nther acts nf endangering life have fallen from 29 per cent in 1980 to 17 per cent in 1994. For rape there was a fall from 37 per cent, or one in three, to 9 per cent, or one in 11. For aggravated hurglary there was a fall from 36 per cent to 10 per cent, 24 to 9 per cent for robbery and 23 to 9 per cent for arson.

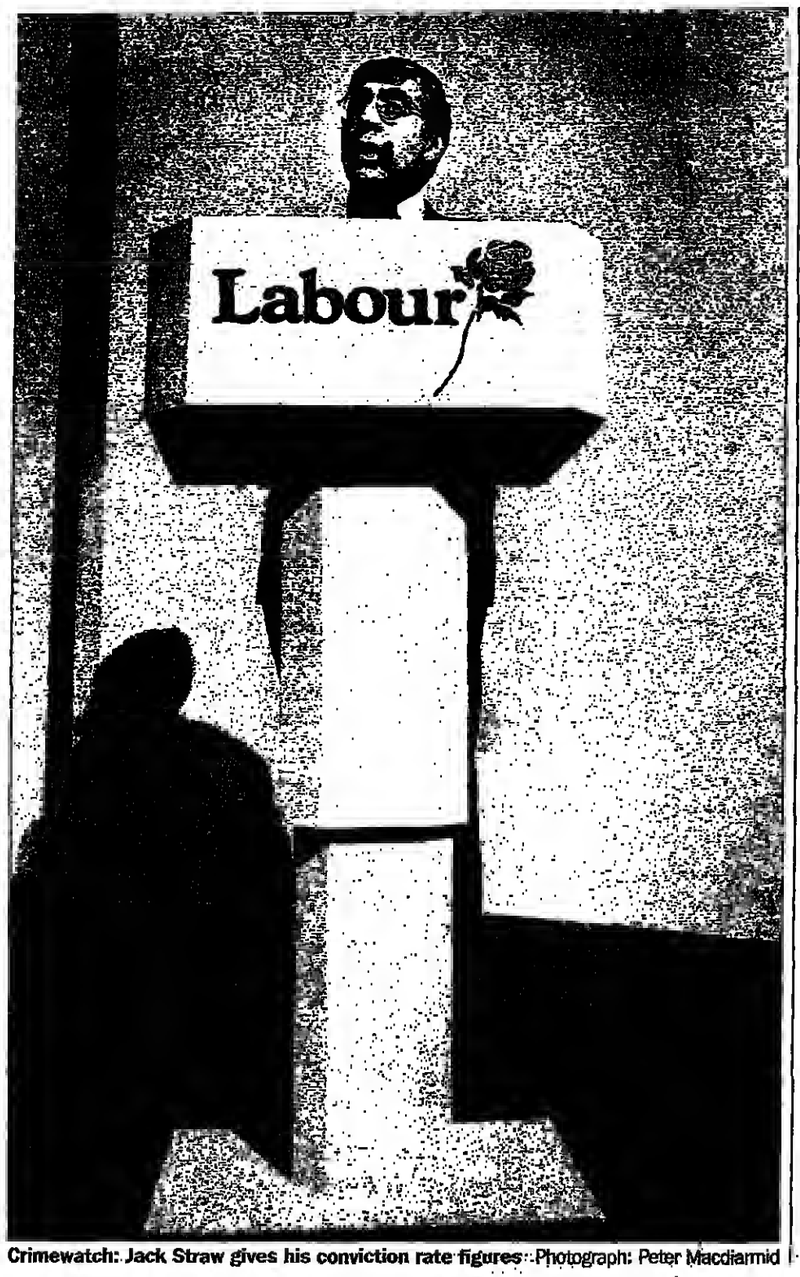
The percentage of convictions or cautions for recorded burglaries has dropped from 9 per cent, or 1 in 11, to 3 per cent, or 1 in every 33.

Mr Straw confirmed Labour's backing for the current parliamentary Bill providing for advance disclosure of defence evidence.

Later, in a Government dehate on policing in London, Mr Straw told the Commons that the existing criminal justice system did not deal with the disorder and apparently petty crime which was the cause of so much of the public's fear of crime. "As loutish behaviour and disorder on the streets has increased so too, rationally, has people's fear of crime."

He called for clearer laws on when young criminals could he brought before the courts, and added: "Despite the reduction in the number of cases coming before youth justice courts, the delays are getting worse." There were "ludicrously complicated" rules oo secure accommodation for young offenders.

There were lessons to be learned from the New York police's handling of street crime and disorder, where people had a "palpable sense that the streets were safer", he said.



Crimewatch: Jack Straw gives his conviction rate figures. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

☐ Opposition attacks Heseltine over late payment of debts
☐ Bottomley says Lottery has created 150 millionaires

Hypocrisy jibe paid back with interest

The Tories' favourite Commons jibe of last week – "Saying one thing and doing another" – turned into a boomerang yesterday as Labour MPs made hay with Michael Heseltine's relaxed attitude to paying business bills.

Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage, found herself manoeuvred into defending the Deputy Prime Minister during Question Time exchanges on the tourist industry.

Spotting the chance tn make trouhle, Dennis Skinner said one of the higgest threats to small businesses involved in tourism was late payment. "It's even worse when Mr Heseltine makes a statement that brags about not paying his dehts, and managing to put other businesses into bankruptcy."

Mr Heseltine told a private dinner last week that late payment was part of the culture of British husiness that as a small businessman himself he had been "quite skillful at stringing along the creditors".

A former partner, Ian Josephs, was quoted in the *Daily Telegraph* yesterday saying that they kept creditors waiting by sending cheques with only one signature when two were needed, or ensuring the words and figures did not match.

Last Friday, the Government published legislation to encourage prompt payment in the building industry. Ministers were also understood to he sympathetic to a Private Member's Bill sponsored by Jon Oweo Jooes, Labour MP for Cardiff Central, to give a legal right to interest on commercial debt.

But Mrs Bottomley appeared unaware of these moves, or the exhortation on Whitehall departments to improve their poor record on payments, as she rejected the Bolsover MP's demanded that she admonish Mr Heseltine "for this Gerald Ratner-type bombshell".

Dismissing Mr Skinner's "windy rhetoric" she said employment in the tourist industry had increased by one-fifth in the last 10 years. "And in the last

Inside Parliament
Stephen Goodwin

10 years Mr Heseltine has played a crucial role in making our country more competitive and fighting the corner of industry."

Later, on a point of order, George Foulkes, Labour MP for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon, noted the Government's support for the commercial debt Bill. "If we have now got this admission for the Deputy Prime Minister that he held off paying his creditors as long as possible, is this not an example of hypocrisy – of 'saying one thing and doing another'?"

Speaker Betty Boothroyd rebuked Mr Foulkes for abusing the time of the House, hut his colleagues cheered his twisting of the soundbite used hy the Tories against Labour in the Harriet Harman schools row.

Peter Hain, Labour MP for Neath, wondered if Mr Heseltine was advocating thai the Government "start fiddling their bill-paying": then Mr Skinner returned to the fray, asking Miss Boothroyd if the Deputy Prime Minister had ever tried to borrow money from her. If he did, "tell him you're tough on deht and tough on the causes of debt".

Outside the House, Barbara Roche, Labour's spokesperson on small business, called on Mr Heseltine to apologise for his "appalling personal and political behaviour".

Heritage Question Time has become so dominated by the National Lottery that no harm would be done to the serious content of the exchanges if Mrs Bottomley was substituted by Anthea Turner, who hosts the weekly draw.

Mrs Bottomley yesterday capped her litany of statistics, including more than 150 millionaires so far and £1.5bn for good causes, with the depressing assertion that the lottery has become the nation's favourite topic of conversation. She was replying to Peter Brooke, a former heritage secretary, who asked if she felt pleasure or concern at the fact that more than half of the questions put down for the 15-minute sessioo were about the lottery.

Unalloyed pleasure seemed to be the answer. Mrs Bottomley, member of a family syndicate, assured MPs the lottery was a resounding success. "The lottery has taken over as the great conversation piece, not only in this House, but throughout our newspapers. It is our favourite topic of conversatioo."

ıy's business

ons: Defence questions; Minister's Questions; De-
ı future of GP fundhold-
ollective Redundancies
ansfer of Undertakings
tion of Employment)
dment) Regulations;
nch debate on proposed
of Frances Withers
Sutton Coldfield. **Lords:**
asting Bill, Committee;
on farms health and

MoD to sell off mansion that cost RAF chief his career

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

A "des res" recently refurbished at a cost of £380,000 is to be put on the open market by the Ministry of Defence, Michael Portillo, the Secretary of State for Defence, told MPs yesterday.

Haymes Garth in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, is expected to raise £500,000 for the taxpayer when it is put on the market at the end of the year. For potential buyers, the house could be a bargain. It has 12 rooms with 20 large windows, all which have been fitted with new curtains at a cost of £35,000.

A princely £30,000 was spent on carpets. No expense was spared in fitting out the house for entertaining by its former occupants, Air Chief Marshal Sir Sandy Wilson, 54, and his wife.

But potential purchasers may be put off by the thought that the house cost Sir Sandy his career and could lead to dozens of other senior officers' residences being put on the market. Sir Sandy was forced to resign from the RAF last year, with a £50,000 a year pension and £150,000 lump sum, by Malcolm Rifkind, the former Secretary of State, after the lavish extent of the refurbishment caused a political storm.

It is currently occupied by Air Marshal David Cousins, the Air Officer Commander in Chief, Personnel and Training Command. Mr Portillo announced it would he sold wheo he moves into another residence adjacent to his headquarters, occupied by Air Vice Marshal John May, the Air Officer Training. That will not be until Air Vice Marshal May completes his tour of duty. The MoD said last night it would be "towards the end of the year".

The housing market may have picked up by then, hut the taxpayer cannot expect to make a killing. In addition to the cost of refurbishments, the row led to a £100,000 auditor's report into the disposal of MoD property. David Clark, Labour's Defence spokesman, said: "It is another example of a gross waste of taxpayer's money. It will mean the taxpayer will lose a lot of money on it."

■ Sir John Bourn, the Auditor General, today reports that overpayments of £19.8m in taxpayers' money have been paid by the Department of Education and Employment to Training and Enterprise Councils, including £7.9m for training weeks which were ineligible.

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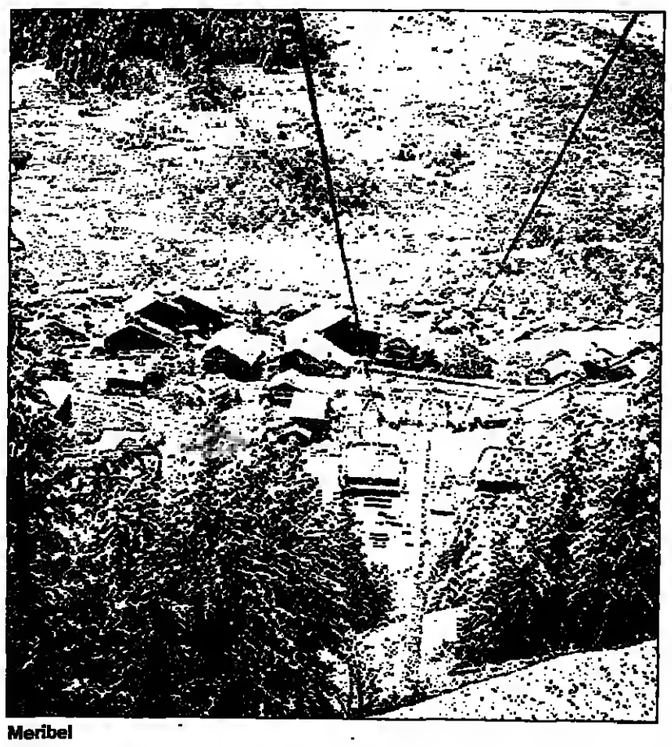
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ski pass
token 3
THE INDEPENDENT

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الأصل

Bosnia team on trail of 'worst massacre so far'

EMMA DALY
Tuzla

The search for thousands of people missing and presumed dead in Bosnia is gathering pace with new investigations into allegations of mass murder and mass graves being planned by senior Western officials.

The latest to visit Srebrenica, site of what is feared to have been the greatest massacre in Europe since the Second World War, was Elizabeth Rehn, the UN's Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, who won a promise from the Bosnian Serbs that women refugees would be allowed to visit Srebrenica to search for their men.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has more than 12,000 reports from families of people who disappeared. Three-quarters involve people missing from Srebrenica, which fell to Serb forces in July. The women cling to the hope of secret Serb prison camps; most fear their men are dead.

Serb officials in Srebrenica told Ms Rehn they held no prisoners. "I said that it's obvious now that there are quite a lot of mass graves, that a lot of people have been killed, and now it's in the interests of all of us to know exactly what happened," said Ms Rehn, the former Finnish defence minister. "We must have a readiness very soon to open them, because there is no time to be lost."

Ms Rehn, who cited a figure of 3,000 to 5,000 people missing from the enclave, said she could not prove that mass killings took place, but added that "the evidence for massacres is very strong".

The women of Srebrenica have waited for more than six months for news of their relatives, and their anguish has turned to anger, with several noisy demonstrations against the Red Cross and local government offices in Tuzla.

The protests have paused as the women put their faith in Ms Rehn, who persuaded the Serbs to grant one of their demands: permission for a bus trip to Srebrenica and its environs. They are convinced that some of their men are still alive, held in slave labour camps in the area: Ms Rehn visited two of the 10 sites the women named, but found nothing.

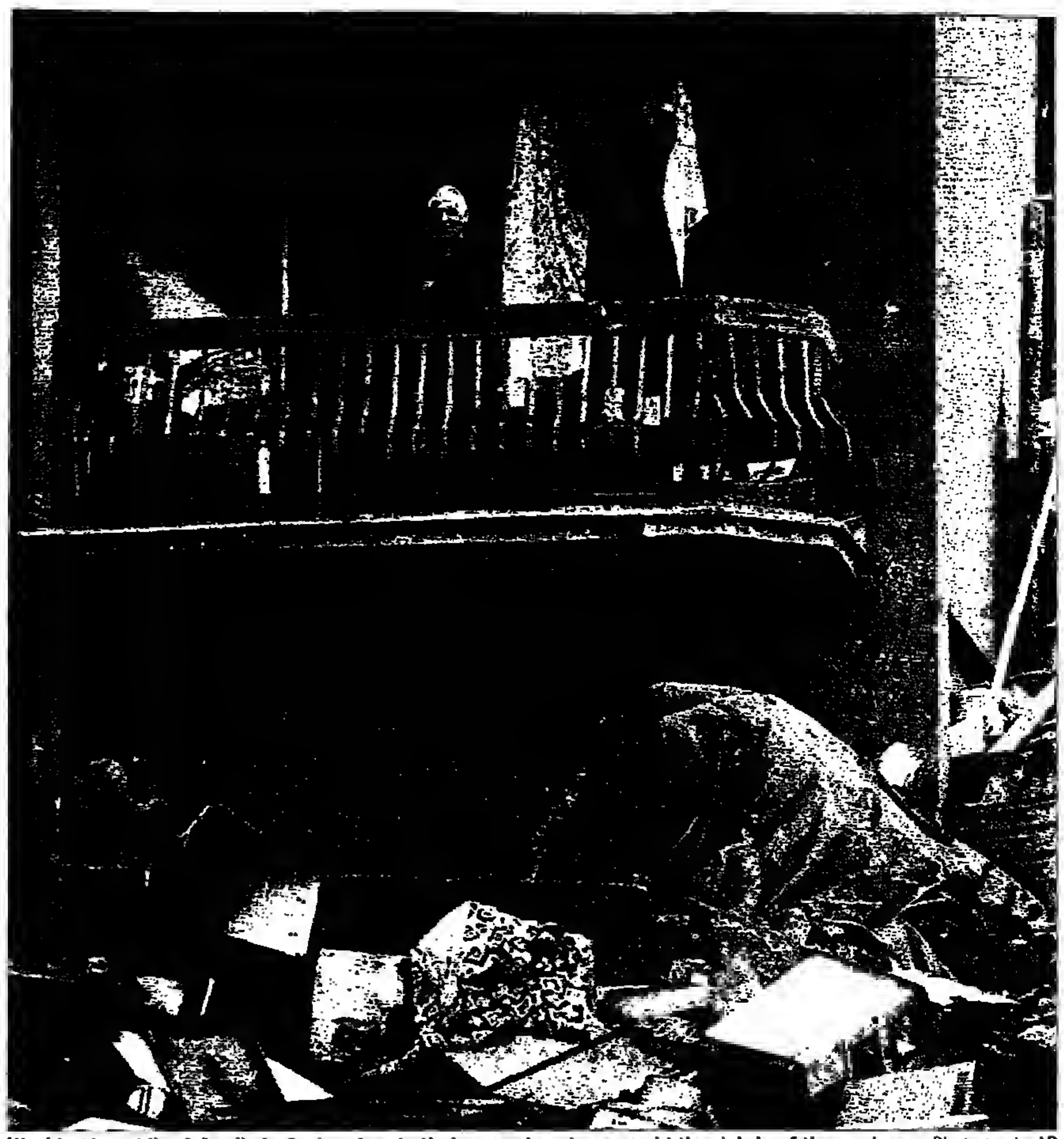
Mina Mujic, described by a colleague as one of "the brave", plans to be on the bus. "I want to see the place where I spent my life and I want to find 35 relatives who are missing," she said firmly. Ms Mujic, whose husband walked to safety in Tuzla one month after Srebrenica fell, believes her brother Nazif is imprisoned in a factory; the information came from his former boss, a Serb.

The news that the Serbs denied holding prisoners – mis-reported as "Rehn says all the missing are dead" – caused much grief.

"How can I have hope when they said last night on the television there was a mass grave with 3,000 bodies?" asked Sadeta Dizdarevic, a weaver. "I lost my husband in 1993 and I don't know anything about my son." Ms Dizdarevic and her two daughters were evacuated when Srebrenica fell – but 17-year-old Selvedin tried to escape.

Ms Rehn believes that eventually such information will emerge, and is hopeful that she will gain access to the graves, following a reversal of the four-year Serb policy of sealing such places to outsiders.

The change will be tested again today, when John Shattuck, US Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, is due to visit an open-cast mine in northern Bosnia alleged to hold the remains of several thousand Muslims massacred by Serbs in 1992.



Washing in public: A family in Srebrenica do their everyday chores amid the debris of the enclave Photograph: AP

Clinton mourns first US death

AGENCIES

President Bill Clinton has expressed condolences to the widow of the first US soldier killed while on duty in Bosnia. The president spoke to Miriam Dugan, wife of Sergeant 1st Class Donald Dugan, by telephone on Sunday morning, said a White House spokesman, David Johnson.

Sgt Dugan, 38, of Belle Center, Ohio, was killed on Saturday in northern Bosnia. He was the ninth alliance soldier to die since Nato troops took over from the United Nations in the Balkans in December.

In Sarajevo, a spokesman for the Nato peace force corrected a previous official statement to make it clear that Dugan's death was not caused by a land mine. The spokesman said that Dugan apparently picked up a piece of unexploded ammunition from the side of the road and it exploded in his hands.

Stars and Stripes, the US military newspaper, said that Büdingen, the military community in Germany where Sgt Dugan lived before deployment to Bosnia, has guards posted to check entering cars. Some residents said they did not want to talk to reporters, while others said the military asked them not to speak to the press.

"The base – which stands almost a ghost town with its soldiers deployed – had been accessible earlier this week, but on Sunday guards stopped every car that entered," the newspaper said.

Dugan: Died when he picked up ammunition

British 'flying chefs' set to cook up a storm for hungry GIs

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Tuzla

They are the flying chefs. They all have a British military background, mostly from the Army Catering Corps, and some from the Navy or RAF, and many have worked in five-star hotel restaurants. They boldly go where no other chef will go – into Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in 1991, Somalia, and now to the US sector in Bosnia.

The US army has arrived here with a panoply of military hardware. Its equipment and demeanour are impressive, and the locals respect both its power and the soldiers' politeness. But back at base, US logistics are a shambles. More than a month after they set foot in Bosnia, the yanks are still eating Meals Ready to Eat, which require no cooking. These combat rations will keep troops going in battle but are not particularly nutritious over a long period and certainly do nothing for morale.

So the US army has contracted with the firm Brown and Root to sort out the army's supply problems, and that company in turn has sub-contracted the catering work to three firms which employ the flying chefs. In all, around 60 British staff have been flown in to Bosnia.

As the British army knows so well, on a tour of several months – or in the Americans' case, a year – with long periods of boredom punctuated by brief periods of terror, top-class food is central to maintaining morale and efficiency. A US officer attached to the British base, five hours' drive away, at Gornji Vakuf, could not contain his first impression of the Brits. "The food's so good," he said, tucking into a second designer pudding which would not have shamed the *Roux* brothers.

The kitchens at the base of Task Force Eagle at Tuzla air base, on the other hand, had been overrun by rats. Cats – the natural solution – are not in evidence: indeed, after the near-siege of Tuzla in 1993-94, very few cats and dogs are to be seen here. On the British base at Gornji, however, a perceptive advance party of feral cats are re-establishing a presence.

The flying chefs will get the kitchens at Tuzla and the other kitchens in the area organised, hygienic, and producing hot, fresh food for 20,000 troops three times a day – a formidable task.

The sub-contractors are also taking care of the American laundry. Last week 140 washing machines had been installed at one base, and the contractors reckoned they could do 18 loads a day. That, too, will help keep the US-led Multinational Division (North) happy.

Last week the flying chefs were raring to go, but there were delays – as there are in every military operation – and, in the meantime, they were billeted at the biggest hotel in Tuzla. "We've recruited the [local] staff. We've got them medicalled – everything. They want to work because they haven't worked for so long. They want to learn," said one chef, a former sergeant major. "Meanwhile, we just wait for the go."

The flying chefs' expertise extends beyond cooking: they can also undertake security work as they are all trained soldiers.

As part of the US operation, the flying chefs were also subject to US Field Order Number One, forbidding consumption of alcohol or gambling anywhere "in theatre". As many chefs had worked in the Gulf during the war there, this was not a problem. But it seemed unjust, as the Americans had not yet given them the green light.

In the hotel, we had all taken to bringing our own builders' tea bags down to breakfast, as the tea provided was a perfumed herbal concoction with half the sugar production of the Caribbean already dissolved in it. We asked for some milk. Eventually, they brought it. Hot, reconstituted powdered milk. "And they don't even know how to do that properly," said the ex-sergeant major.

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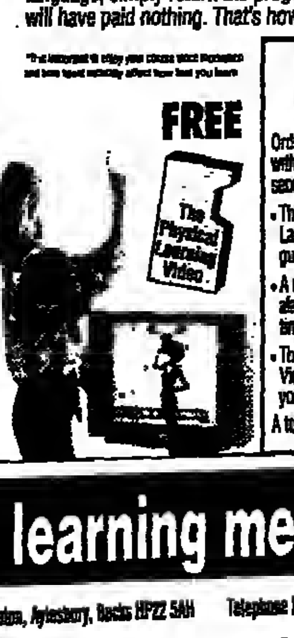

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international

Diplomacy: War games threaten Taiwan again

US calms China but talks tough

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington
TERESA POOLE
Peking

In a delicate diplomatic balancing act, the US is trying to ease tensions between China and Taiwan, while stepping up its pressure on Peking to improve its human rights record and cease its violations of international trade and weapons non-proliferation treaties.

Senior Clinton Administration officials will be making these concerns plain to the deputy Chinese foreign minister, Li Zhaoxing, who is visiting Washington this week. Mr Li's trip comes amid reports of planned large-scale naval manoeuvres by the Chinese military in the straits separating the mainland from Taiwan, and carefully leaked warnings by Peking that it has readied plans to crush Mr Lee's regime by military means if necessary – both clearly designed to intimidate Taiwan's assertive President Lee Teng-hui.

According to the *Washington Post* yesterday, the Administration's priority is to "calm down" the frictions over Taiwan, which have caused near panic in some Asian financial markets, by persuading the Chinese that everyone – including Peking – would suffer from any destabilisation of the region.

But this will not be easy, given the list of grievances with which Mr Li will be presented. They range from accusations that China is ignoring its 1995 undertaking to halt pirating of US-patented video, CD and other electronic goods to new evidence that China is flouting arms proliferation controls.

Although the White House is reported to have dropped plans to impose a deadline, Mr Li will be told his country faces severe economic sanctions if it fails to halt the illegal production.

Simultaneously, fresh trouble is brewing over Chinese weapons exports to Iran and Pakistan. Last week, the commander of US forces in the Persian Gulf claimed Peking had sold advanced cruise missiles to the Iranians, while the CIA is complaining about alleged Chinese sales to Pakistan of uranium enrichment equipment.

China's land, sea and air exercises are being timed to have the maximum impact on Taiwan's first democratic presidential elections, scheduled for 23 March.

Taiwan's defence ministry yesterday said mainland troops in the coastal province of Fujian, opposite Taiwan, had not shown any irregular movements. But the island's stock market fell sharply after a report in the Hong Kong *Sing Tao* newspaper that 400,000 Chinese troops were massing.

China conducted two series of war-games last year, after President Lee's visit to the US in June enraged Peking's leaders. In the summer the army test-fired missiles into the sea around Taiwan. Then in September land and sea exercises left the Taiwanese in no doubt of China's intentions should the island state declare independence.

President Lee, the expected winner of the March polls, yesterday dismissed the upcoming drills. "They are scared to death of our historic presidential election," he said.

All parties are trying to calm the situation. President Lee has recently let the Clinton Administration know that he does not plan a visit to the US after the election, thereby defusing the most likely trigger for a dangerous escalation in the cross-Straits friction.

Similarly, Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives and leader of the militant Republican friends of Taiwan, last week indicated that Congress would not issue its own invitation to a re-elected President Lee.

Head of steam: Dawn in Butte, Montana, an old mining town in the grip of winter. Overnight temperatures at the weekend dipped to -33C Photograph: AP

Saddam told to 'swallow pride' on oil

SAFA HAERI
Paris
DAVID USBORNE
New York

President Saddam Hussein agreed to open new talks with the UN on limited oil sales only after he had been convinced that there was no possibility of change in the US insistence on sanctions, according to Middle East sources.

President Saddam was told bluntly by a team of ministers led by the veteran Tariq Aziz, the influential Depnty Prime Minister, that Iraq had a choice: either to "swallow its pride and accept the UN offer or to face a nationwide uprising," the source said, as the country is desperate for money.

This suggests that negotiations which open in New York today may finally result in agreement between the United Nations and Iraq on oil sales. At stake is Resolution 986 of the UN Security Council, which would permit Iraq to export up to $1bn (£660m) of oil every 90 days for a 180-day period on condition that the proceeds are used to pay for the country's humanitarian needs.

Until now President Saddam has systematically ruled out any such conditional negotiations, pointing out that they violated Iraqi sovereignty, and pressed for a relaxation of sanctions. But "he was told by [Tariq] Aziz that he should not count on any change in Clinton's position concerning Iraq during an election year, no matter what pressure France, Russia and China might exercise in the Security Council", the source added.

Diplomats at the United Nations were cautioning yesterday that they did not expect talks with Iraq on allowing it to export limited quantities of oil for humanitarian reasons to be either easy or quick.

"There is no sense of optimism," remarked one European diplomat who will be monitoring the negotiations. "We are in a wait-and-see mode, because I don't think any of us yet know whether Iraq is really serious about this. The only person who does know is probably Saddam Hussein himself."

The United States reiterated at the UN yesterday that the provisions in the resolution itself were not open for renegotiation. The resolution includes conditions that a majority of the oil be exported via a pipeline through Turkey to the Mediterranean; that 30 per cent of what Baghdad earns be set aside to pay claims against Iraq arising from the Gulf war; and that at least $130m of the revenues in each 90-day period be assigned to Iraqi Kurds. The whole operation, meanwhile, would be overseen by the United Nations.

The negotiations will begin this morning behind closed doors at the UN headquarters and are expected to take days and possibly weeks. "We expect them [the Iraqis] to drag this out with all kinds of objections on technical and sovereignty questions," one official said.

The Iraqi team will be led by Abdul Amir al-Anbari, the present Iraqi envoy to Unesco in Paris. One of Iraq's most able and senior diplomats, Mr Anbari performed well at the UN during the difficult days of the Gulf war.

Foreign diplomats based in Baghdad said yesterday that they saw signs Iraq was preparing to soften its position.

Official media in Baghdad mentioned Resolution 986 without criticism for the first time yesterday. Iraqi authorities have also been stressing the preparations they have made to load tankers at terminals in the northern Gulf. Iraq said on Sunday that two of its tankers were ready to supply fuel to ships calling at Iraqi ports, the official Iraqi News Agency reported.

UN ready to lay off staff in cash crisis

New York — For the first time in its history, the United Nations is planning to lay off staff members in New York and at other UN missions around the world in a last-resort effort to save money and stave off impending insolvency, writes David Usborne.

The move, which is likely to be welcomed by the UN's critics, may be announced as early as this morning by the Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in testimony to a committee on financial reform.

Officials denied reports yesterday that as many as 1,500 UN jobs were to be eliminated. Sources close to the Secretary-General confirmed, however, that a staff reduction plan would include "a limited number of lay-offs".

A report in yesterday's *Washington Post* said that "a massacre" was possible among the organisation's 14,000 professional and clerical workers.

Mr Boutros-Ghali has been urged to take drastic action by the Under-Secretary-General charged with overseeing UN finances, Joseph Connor, an American. Mr Connor, who came to the UN from the accounting firm Price Waterhouse, has warned that a current budget deficit of $2.1bn (£1.3bn) means the organisation will run out of funds entirely by the end of April unless action is taken.

A memorandum to the Secretary-General from the UN's finance committee concluded that the cash crisis was a "politically inspired financial collapse". Half of the money the UN is missing is owed to it by the United States.

Homeless quake victims freeze

TERESA POOLE
Peking

Sub-zero temperatures and seismic aftershocks were hindering rescue efforts in Lijiang yesterday as the death toll from Saturday night's earthquake reached about 250. Doctors working in tents and outdoors battled to treat about 3,700 severely injured people, while hundreds of thousands of the homeless prepared to spend their third night outdoors.

Yunnan provincial officials said that rescue teams had evacuated 22 foreign tourists stranded at Tiger Leaping Gorge, a popular day trip about 60 miles from Lijiang. One American man was seriously injured, and another four tourists were slightly hurt. The Lijiang valley, in south-west China, is dominated by Jade Dragon Snow mountain, a popular tourist destination. However, there have been no reports of foreigners killed in the quake, which registered 7 on the Richter scale.

Television pictures last night showed dazed villagers picking through the rubble of their homes. Provincial officials said 180,000 buildings had been destroyed. The Chinese Red Cross Society has appealed for international aid: food, warm clothing, tents and quilts are desperately needed for the impoverished area. Temperatures have plunged much lower than normal for this time of year, dropping to -10C at night. Sixteen of the county's 24 towns were heavily damaged, and power and water supplies have been disrupted in many areas.

In some parts of the old town of Lijiang about 10 per cent of the homes were destroyed. The town is the centre for the Naxi minority nationality and, with its cobbled streets and distinctive architecture, was one of the most picturesque places in China.

Buildings were further weakened as aftershocks continued. The largest tremor, in the early morning, reached 6 on the Richter scale. New casualties seemed to have been avoided as terrified residents had already left their homes. "It doesn't matter whether people still have homes or they don't. Everyone is too scared to go inside," said one official.

Outside the towns, north-west Yunnan province is one of the poorest regions of China, and medical facilities are extremely limited.

Guatemala assassination scare clouds Pope's arrival

PHIL DAVISON
Latin America Correspondent

The Pope was due in Guatemala City at the start of a Central American tour last night amid heightened security after what was billed as an assassination attempt against his host, President Alvaro Arzu.

The incident raised fears that someone – most fingers pointed to disgruntled Guatemalan military officers – wanted to disrupt the Pope's visit and might try again during his four nights in the Guatemalan capital, day trips to Nicaragua and El Salvador or a weekend stopover in Venezuela.

In a bizarre incident 24 hours before the Pope flew in, a milkman drove his pick-up truck into a group of horseback riders including the newly-elected President, his wife and security men outside the tourist town of Antigua, 30 miles west of the capital.

The milkman, named as 24-year-old Pedro Haroldo Sas or Zas, was shot dead by bodyguards after repeatedly trying to drive into Mr Arzu and his horse, injuring one mounted bodyguard and ramming accompanying presidential vehicles, according to the official version. The President was unharmed.

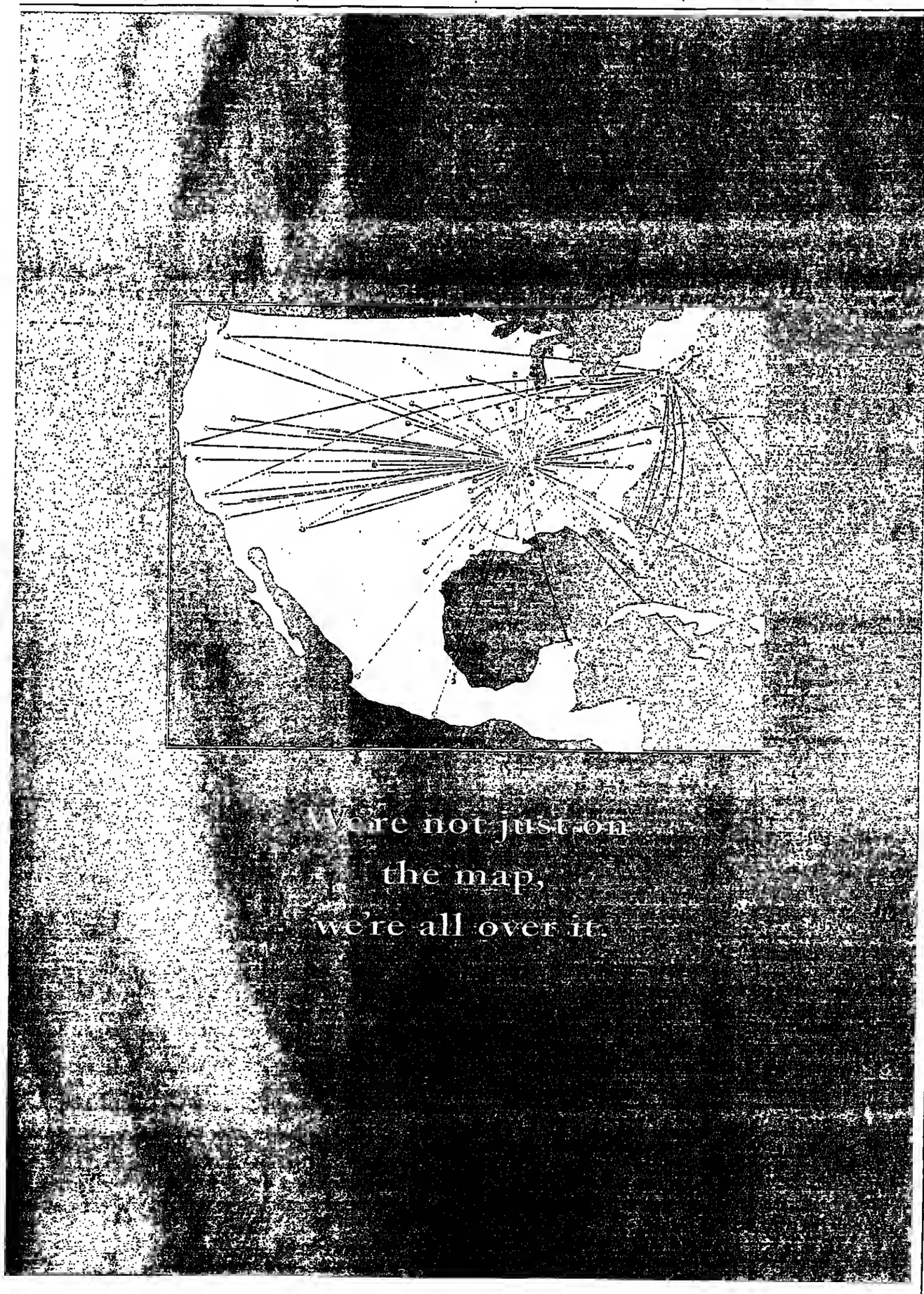
The dead man's father insisted it had been nothing more than a traffic accident. "He was working, delivering milk. He had no weapon," he said.

The Interior Minister, Rodolfo Mendoza, said: "This could have been a crazy man but we are not ruling out anything." He added that extra security measures were being put in force to protect the Pope. An autopsy was being carried out to see whether the milkman had been drinking or on drugs.

The government spokesman, Ricardo de la Torre, was emphatic. "Today, there was an attempt to assassinate President Alvaro Arzu and the first lady of the nation, Patricia Escobar de Arzu," he told a news conference.

Foreign diplomats and local priests speculated that military officers, angered by Mr Arzu's dismissal of several hard-line officers since he took office last month, may have hired the milkman as a hitman. In the presidential election run-off, Mr Arzu, a 49-year-old businessman, defeated a candidate widely seen as a front for the former military dictator General Efrain Rios Montt, who was barred from running because of his past.

The general, who is also a Protestant evangelical dedicated to converting Catholics, was in power during the Pope's last visit to Guatemala in 1983. He "welcomed" the Pontiff at that time by executing six left-wing suspects for whom the Pope had called for clemency.



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Golan settlers fear withdrawal looms

Israel: As Warren Christopher meets Shimon Peres, a deal with Syria hangs in the balance

PATRICK COCKBURN
Qazrin, Golan Heights

Israeli settlers in Qazrin, the largest town in the Golan Heights, watched anxiously yesterday as thousands of demonstrators gathered to show their opposition to withdrawal.

"The spirit of the people has declined since the assassination of Rabin," says Marla Van Metr, spokesperson for the Golan residents. "Before that people opposed the government, but now the tendency is to rally around it."

The Golan settlers were hoping to revive the spirit of opposition among the 50,000 demonstrators, each of whom was to plant a symbolic tree, expressing Israel's determination not to give the Heights, captured in 1967, back to Syria. All were to receive certificates saying they had planted a tree "to honour the homeland in the basalt land of the Golan."

It is a critical moment for the 15,000 settlers. As their supporters were gathering, Warren Christopher, the US Secretary of State, was meeting Shimon Peres, the Prime Minister, in Jerusalem on his 16th visit to the Middle East in three years to try to broker a deal between Israel and Syria. Mr Peres has already said peace means Israel returning the Golan.

Nobody expects any breakthrough before the Israeli elections, now expected to be brought forward from October to May, but if Mr Peres and the Labour government win, then a peace agreement is possible before the end of the year. The future of the Golan will therefore depend on the election in which the Right will try to make withdrawal from the Golan and peace with Syria the central issue. It can do little else because in the wake of Rabin's assassination, peace with the Palestinians and the Oslo accords are favoured by 59 per cent of Israeli voters.

The Golan settlers and their friends like to emphasise how different they are from Israeli settlers on the West Bank and in Gaza, with their reputation for violence, racism and religious bigotry. Professor Emanuel Noy-Meir, from Hebrew University, in Qazrin to show solidarity with the Golan residents, contrasts them with "a few hundred Jews in Hebron who went there against the national consensus and expect the army to defend them."

He says: "I am not a rightist. I have campaigned for the rights of Arabs in Israel and bedouin in the south. I am in favour of the rights of minorities, of which the Golan settlers are one." Nevertheless, there is no doubt about where the settlers are looking primarily for support. Most of the 620 buses bringing people to the Golan yesterday were hired by parties of the nationalist and religious right.

Also planting his tree was General Rafael Eitan, leader of the second largest right-wing party, Tsomet, who has just dropped his own bid for the premiership. A short, muscular man — he led the less than successful Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 — he said: "The Golan will be the central issue in the election."

He has decided that Tsomet, a secular nationalist party, will form an electoral block with Likud, the main party of the right. The reason is desperation on the right and General Eitan's belief that only if it unites can it prevent a victory by Mr Peres and Labour. In the election for Prime Minister General Eitan would only have siphoned off votes from Binyamin Netanyahu, the leader of Likud, who already trails Mr Peres by 16 per cent in the polls.

The Prime Minister and the Knesset (parliament) will be elected separately this year.

Many Labour party supporters oppose withdrawal. Also at Qazrin yesterday was Avigdor Kahalani, the tank commander who defended the Golan against Syrian attack in 1973, and is now leading a breakaway Labour faction in the Knesset called the Third Way, which rejects giving up the Heights.

Mr Peres has tried to defuse the opposition by promising a referendum on peace with Syria, but the settlers suspect – almost certainly rightly – that the election in May provides their best chance of staying where they are.

Sudan vows to step up 'terrorist' hunt

DAVID ORR
Khartoum

Sudan is to intensify its search for three suspects wanted in connection with the attempted assassination of the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, last year. If found on Sudanese territory, they will be arrested and extradited, Ali Osman Mohammed Taha, the country's Foreign Minister, said yesterday.

His assurances come in the wake of a UN Security Council resolution demanding that Sudan hand over three Egyptians suspected of trying to kill President Mubarak in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, last June.

Sudan's Islamic regime has for a long time been accused by the West, particularly the United States, of training and harbouring terrorists. Since the attack on President Mubarak, Sudan's relations with Egypt and Ethiopia have deteriorated dramatically.

"We are putting more effort into demonstrating our seriousness in conducting this search," the influential minister told the *Independent* yesterday. "We are taking some measures which will be made public in a day or two. What else can we do? We have been given an impossible mission".

The Khartoum government of Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan al-Bashir, which has consistently denied any involvement in the assassination attempt, has been given 60 days by the UN to hand over the three suspects. It admits that one of the three Egyptians named by Ethiopia did enter Sudan after the attack but insists that he did not stay.

"We believe the resolution has been based on unfounded presumptions," said Mr Taha. "We feel we have been unjustly treated on this issue. Sudan is an open country. We have never provided military training for any elements whether they are Egyptians or other nationalities."

Mr Taha said his government would shortly begin a campaign to explain its position. The UN resolution is being seen here as part of an international conspiracy to isolate Sudan and as a prelude to demands for trade sanctions by the US.

The Security Council resolution condemning Sudan was immediately followed by an announcement by the US that it was withdrawing all American personnel from its embassy in Khartoum. Some 30 embassy employees are due to leave the Sudanese capital by the end of this week though the US insists it is not breaking diplomatic relations. A US embassy spokesman yesterday dismissed as "totally coincidental" the fact that the announcement of the withdrawal came at the same time as the resolution.

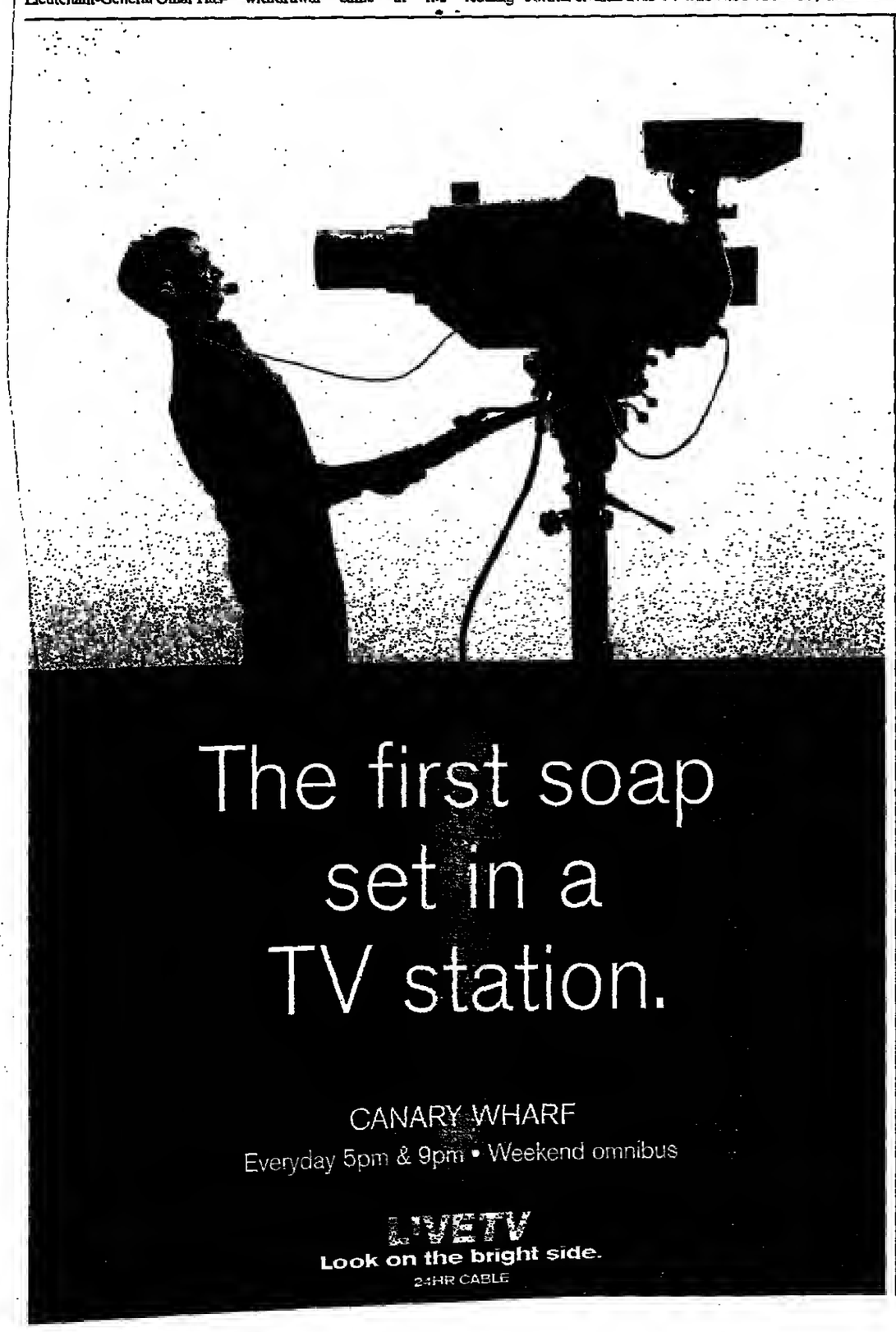
"We're suspending our presence out of concern for the safety of our personnel," said the diplomat. "There's been no one development which has prompted our decision. We've had a longstanding concern over Sudan harbouring terrorist groups. It's dangerous for us here and it will continue to be dangerous for as long as the Sudanese government fails to curb the activities of terrorist groups based here."

The US says the threats to its staff come from both Sudanese and "non-Sudanese elements", a catch-all phrase denoting Palestinian and other groups. The US, which has had Sudan on its list of state sponsors of terrorism since 1993, reports the existence in the country of up to 20 terrorist training camps. The camps are said to be moved frequently to outwit spy satellites.

"For some international powers – particularly for the US and Britain – the Islamic attitudes of Sudan pose a threat to their interests," said Mr Taha. "But our interpretation of Islam does not lead to confrontation with the West, it does not lead to violence or terrorism."

Mr Taha admitted that there are many Palestinian and other Arabs based in Sudan but denied they are engaged in military activities. They were leading "normal civilian lives".

Underwater battle: Fireman Don Lopez pulling Marglyn Paseka, 15, from a flooded creek in Santa Rosa, California, after she and a friend, who was also rescued, tried to cross in a dustbin. Marglyn was trapped in the water for 45 minutes
Photograph: Annie Wells/AP



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Please complete in block capitals

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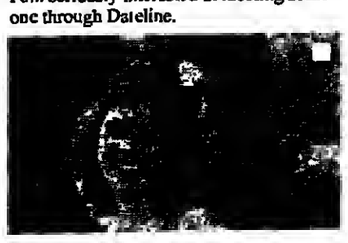

2. Personal Information
Marital Status: Single ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed ☐ Separated ☐
Religion: _____
Age: _____
Place of Birth: _____
Do you have children of your own? Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, how many live with you? _____

3. Your personal details
Height: _____
Build: slight ☐ medium ☐ large ☐
Hair colour: _____
Dress/Looks: casual ☐ fashionable ☐ elegant ☐ sporty ☐

4. Your work
Present job: _____
Self-employed ☐ employed ☐ civil servant ☐ manual worker ☐ part-time ☐ not working ☐ unemployed ☐ retired ☐
Education
O levels / GCSE's ☐ A levels ☐ Further Education ☐ University ☐ Technical Qualification ☐
Other: _____

5. Your Personality
☐ Affectionate ☐ Fashionable ☐ Serious ☐ Practical ☐ Considerate ☐ Conventional ☐ Shy ☐ Reliable ☐ Romantic ☐ Adventurous

6. How would people who know you best describe you?
☐ always ready for a joke ☐ somewhat dreamy ☐ never has problems ☐ takes life a bit too seriously ☐ not easily upset ☐ always active ☐ chatty

7. Your interests
☐ Wining/Dining ☐ Jazz/Folk music ☐ Pubs ☐ Classical music ☐ Sports/Keep fit ☐ Theatre/Arts ☐ Politics/History ☐ Watching TV ☐ Reading ☐ Smoking ☐ Travelling ☐ Astrology ☐ Science/Tech ☐ Children ☐ Cinema ☐ Homemaking ☐ Pets/Animals ☐ Gardening ☐ Pop music ☐ Countryside

8. Details of the partner you would like:
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Height: min. _____ max. _____
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They're off! Prize is the planet's top job

With the Republican revolution apparently stalled, Bill Clinton is the early favourite for a second term, writes **Rupert Cornwell**

The campaign for the US presidency began long ago. For some aspirants it began at the very moment Bill Clinton defeated George Bush in 1992. But tonight the real votes of real voters are counted for the first time. Republicans of the state of Louisiana bold caucuses to select the man they think should carry their party's standard against Mr Clinton this autumn. The race for the White House is on.

By the end of the long and tortuous route to election day, thousands of polls will have been taken, millions of miles travelled and hundreds of millions of dollars spent. Finally, on 5 November, nine months almost to the day, America will learn the identity of the president who will lead it from the American Century into the 21st century.

Rarely has a presidential election been harder to read. With the Soviet Union vanished, America is at peace, its diplomatic and military pre-eminence unchallenged, its concerns exclusively domestic. One year ago, Mr Clinton appeared doomed, his Democrats utterly vanquished by Newt Gingrich's Republicans in the mid-term Congressional elections of November 1994. The results seemed to prove that the country had moved decisively rightward; but has it? Can the Republicans complete their conservative revolution by regaining the White House?

In the past 12 months the Republicans, vigorously pursuing their mission to slay Big Government, have seriously overreached themselves.

Mr Clinton, after almost disappearing from view for several months, has re-emerged to play brilliantly on public fears about the future of federal health programmes, education and the environment. Every sign is that the public believes Mr Gingrich and his men want to go too far, too fast. Contrary to the cherished tenets of their history, Americans are no longer political revolutionaries. Here, as nowhere else, checks and balances are built into the system, and elections won and lost in the centre. This year could prove anew that, for all their complaints about "gridlock" and a government that does not work, Americans secretly prefer that supreme check and balance – a government divided between the major parties.

If he prevails, Mr Clinton will become the first Democrat since Franklin Roosevelt, more than 50 years ago, to be elected for a second term. At this early stage, the President must be favoured, albeit narrowly. Despite the vicissitudes of his three years in power, Mr Clinton is a lucky, as well as an intensely skilful, politician. He is a marvellous campaigner too, a gifted speaker who can trounce in debate any Republican in the lacklustre pack on offer.

Fortunate indeed is a sitting president who faces neither a primary challenger from within his own party nor a charismatic champion from the opposition. Jimmy Carter, the last Democrat to seek re-election, was, on the whole, better loved than Mr Clinton but be lost. He was weakened by an internal challenge from Edward Kennedy in the primaries in the spring and was finished off by the rise of Ronald Reagan in the autumn.

With Mr Clinton, nothing can be counted certain. Nearly half the electorate say they do not trust him. The foibles of his private life are well-documented and his political persona is slippery as ever: the man who ran in 1992 as a "New Democrat" then governed as an old-style liberal Democrat, stole Republican themes by the dozen in his recent State of the Union address. And in the wings, obscure but unpredictable, lurk the confusing but stubborn allegations of financial misconduct in his Arkansas days, known collectively as Whitewater.

But first the focus is on the Republicans as they select their nominee. For all the thunder they have generated on Capitol Hill, the party's storm-troopers have no true representative in the field. Speaker Newt Gingrich, their now-tarnished champion, is not running (too unpopular). Other media favourites, such as General Colin Powell, could not face the sheer nastiness and complexity of the process. Bob Dole, the early favourite for the nomination, is a reluctant revolutionary at best, while Mr Dole's main early challenger, the millionaire publisher Steve Forbes, is not a politician at all. The rest are nowhere.

Two of the over-arching themes of Campaign '96 are clear. One is the basic philosophical argument over the size and role of government. The debate embraces the burning issues of the moment: the clamour for a balanced budget and lower taxes, the unending criticism of Washington and its ways, and the myriad proposals to shift power from the centre to the states.

But an enduring paradox muddies the argument. Much as Americans detest government, they have grown to love the benefits and safety-nets which government offers.

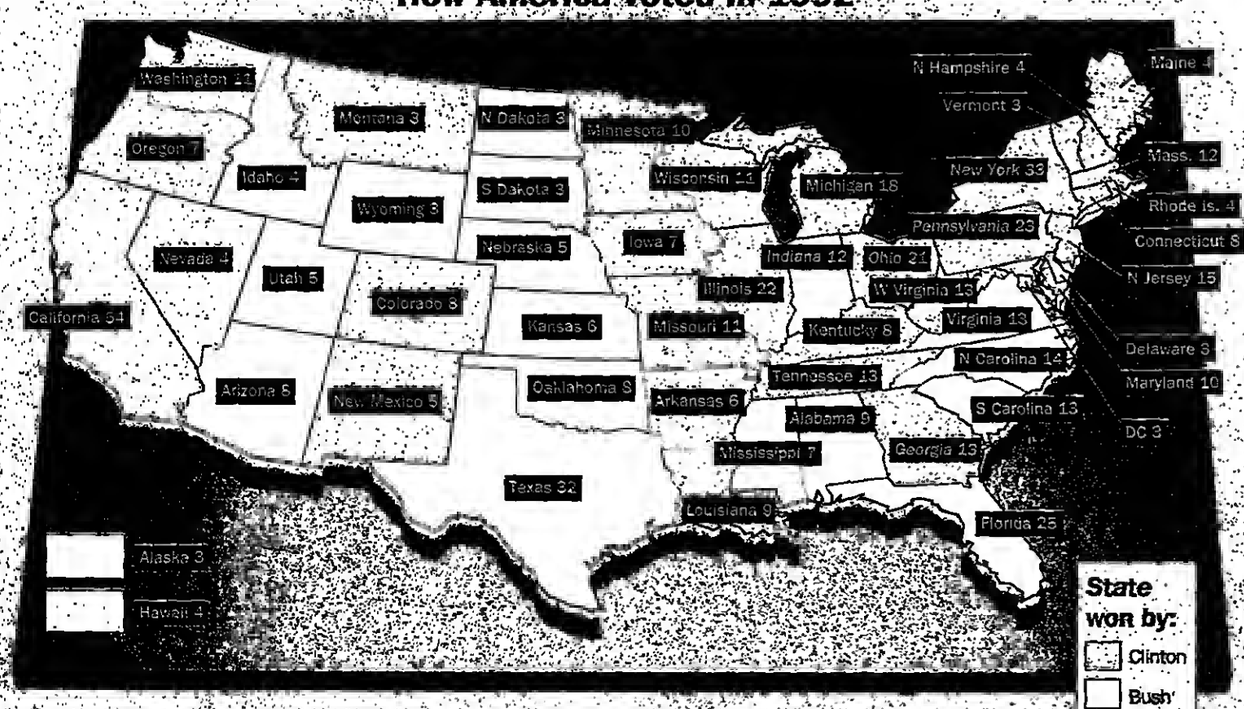
And so to the other leitmotif of this election year, on which few candidates care to dwell. It is fear – more exactly economic fear, deriving from corporate down-sizing, the disappearance of jobs that had been safe for generations, and the dawning realisation that Americans are no longer guaranteed an eternally rising standard of living in which each generation aspires to a more comfortable existence than the last. Wall Street may be booming, but Main Street USA is frightened. The well-heeled novice Steve Forbes prospers because, for a while at least, he can conjure away these concerns with his talk of a flat tax to cure the nation's ills.

Of the other candidates, only Pat Buchanan explicitly addresses the issue, with his call for controls on immigration, and an economic Fortress America.

Nor may November's run-off be limited to the contenders of the leading parties. With the Republicans and Democrats having feuded and failed to balance the budget, the opening is there for another millionaire, Ross Perot, who convulsed and then disappointed the nation in 1992, to make another independent run, this time at the head of his own party.

And what happens if Mr Dole folds and the Republicans weary of Mr Forbes? Could they turn to one of the notables who (probably wisely) decided not to subject themselves and their families to the savage ordeal of a Presidential campaign – Jack Kemp, Dick Cheney, or even General Powell, the man with the best chance of beating Mr Clinton? The prospect of a late entrant being brokered into the nomination at the Republican convention is remote, but not impossible. Election 1996 could yet prove to be a rollercoaster.

How America voted in 1992



Clinton:
43.2% of popular vote
370 electoral college votes
32 states

Bush:
37.7% of popular vote
168 electoral college votes
18 states

Perot:
19.0% of popular vote
0 electoral college votes
0 states

Runners and riders in the White House stakes

BILL CLINTON
The Perils of Pauline President
Ladbrokes odds to win in November: 4-7 on

Gennifer Flowers and the Vietnam draft nearly finished him four years ago: now, as primary season rolls around again, it's Hillary, Whitewater and Paula Jones. And yet 1992's self-appointed Comeback Kid somehow wriggles free of every scrape. Written off after the Republican sweep of Congress a year ago, he now starts the campaign odds-on favourite for a second term, having hijacked many of the Republicans' best lines.

No politician can change position faster – and none is better on the stump. At 49, he's younger than all but one of his rivals. His financial war-chest is full, there's not a Democratic challenger in sight, and the Republican field is drabness made-flesh. No Democrat has dared challenge him for the party nomination. His own approval ratings are more than 50 per cent, among the best of his presidency. Forget gays in the military, the health-care reform fiasco – this president has the knack of getting his mistakes out of the way early. Or has he? That's the perverse charm of Bill Clinton: just when he seems to have it made, something crops up. What this time?

ROBERT DOLE
If he makes it, it will be a triumph of experience over hope
Ladbrokes odds: 6-4

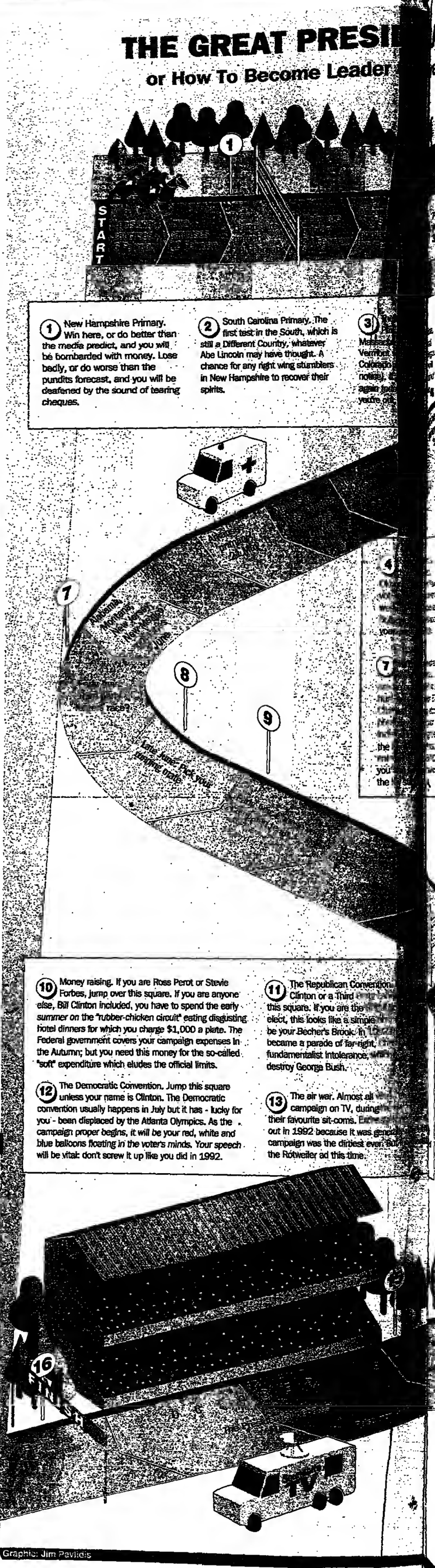
For 28 years a Senator for Kansas, Bob Dole is the eternal presidential loser. He lost as Gerald Ford's running-mate in 1976, he lost to Ronald Reagan in 1980, to George Bush in 1988, and in 1996 – oh, no – is he going to lose again? A year ago, with Dole at 45 per cent in the polls and the rest nowhere, the very thought seemed impossible. But now he's struggling.

Too old at 72, a creature of Washington, too grumpy and bad-tempered; above all, they say, he's a legislative automaton who can't see beyond the fine print of a congressional continuing resolution. Who needs vision, he told a questioner about his White House plans, "I'm just gonna serve." That is, if he ever gets the chance. With Steve Forbes snapping at his heels, even overtaking in some New Hampshire polls, the Dole temper could be about to snap too. If so, his White House ambitions are over. But he's got a wife as smart as Hillary Clinton and with twice the poise and for once he's listening to his advisers. And there's that heroic war record, which Dole has barely mentioned. Don't write him off – after all, who else is there?

STEVE FORBES
Maybe money can buy the White House
Ladbrokes odds: 8-1

The scion of the Forbes publishing fortune has spent his way into contention for the Republican nomination, preaching a flat tax, a flat tax and ... a flat tax. The public persona of Forbes, 48, is of a nice guy with a shy, lopsided smile, positively oozing good cheer and optimism, two qualities at a premium in a sepulchral Republican field.

In fact, he's a very serious operator, a family man with five daughters, not quite the son and heir you'd expect of the ballonist, motorbiking hedonist and self-publicist who was Malcolm Forbes Sr. His advisers include former top aides of that right-wing curmudgeon, Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina. Most of all, he's loaded and is ready to spend it – up to $25m (£16.5m) of a personal fortune of $450m, he says. Already he's lashed out $15m, almost all of it on a ruthless campaign of negative television and radio advertising which has targeted Bob Dole. Steve Forbes is picking up the millionaire-politician baton dropped (temporarily?) by Ross Perot. He is more thoughtful than the Texan but his political staying power is unproven. Already Forbes Jr is as famous as Forbes Sr, and with much greater reason.



Graphic: Jim Pavlidis

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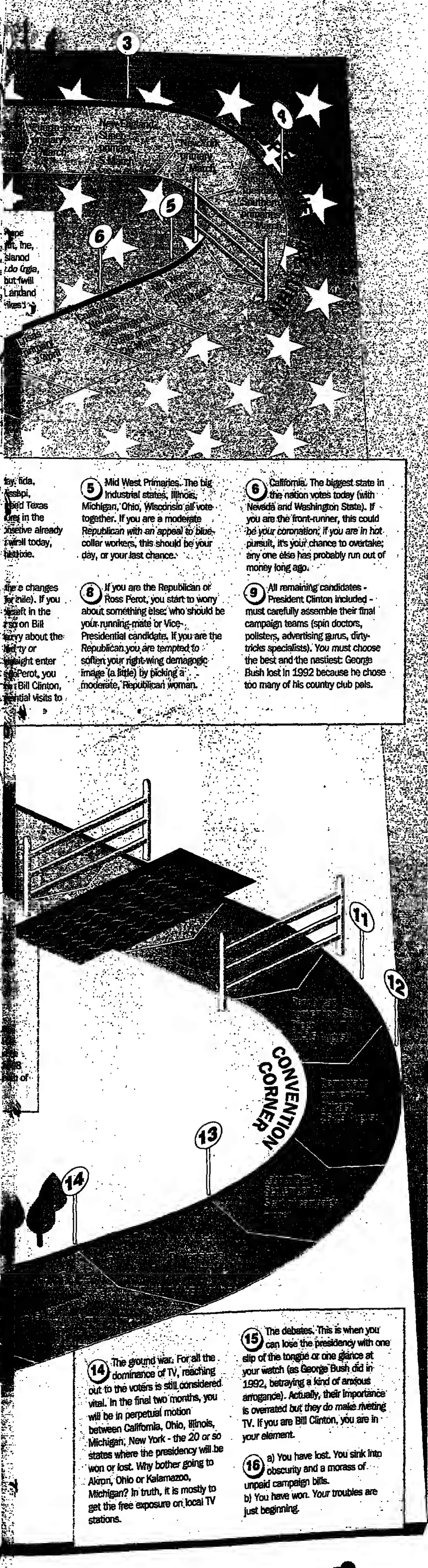

How the system works

The American way of politics

British politicians stand for office; Americans run. Britain has elections; America has "races".

Today there begins *officially*, with a small caucus in Louisiana, the greatest political race of them all, the lengthiest, costliest and most brutal democratic exercise in the world. The first big fences in this great steeplechase are the Iowa caucuses on 12 February and the New Hampshire primary on 20 February. The winning post is a mind-numbing nine months' away on 5 November.

Why so long? Why so costly?

With the rise of the primary system in the past 40 years, presidential elections have fallen into two parts. There is a rolling state-by-state campaign *within* the major parties from February until the conventions crown the Republican and Democratic nominees in the summer. Then there is a campaign *between* the party champions from September to November.

There are many criticisms of primaries. They lead to a period of bloody trench warfare within the party (the Democrats are exempt this time because Bill Clinton is unopposed); they force a prolonged campaign, which leaves media, public and politicians cynical and exhausted: they often defeat – or deter – the best candidates.

But there is also much to be said *for* primaries. In no other country does the public have a chance to select the party's standard-bearer as well as choose between the parties. In the US system, in which power is divided between the executive (the presidency) and legislature (Congress), recognised party leaders do not emerge from parliament.

The only alternative way to choose a party's candidate would be the old, discredited way: party bosses deciding in smoke-filled rooms and then manipulating the convention.

What is a primary? What is a caucus? A primary is a state-wide election in which all registered voters can take part. Caucuses take several forms but consist essentially of meetings throughout the state in which supporters vote by a show of hands or ballot. In some states, such as California, only those registered as Democrats can vote for Democrats and only Republicans can vote for Republicans. In other states, such as New Hampshire anyone can vote for anyone.

The rules, order and dates of primaries and caucuses vary from party to party, state to state and election to election. There has been one crucial change this time. California, the biggest prize of all, has moved its primary from June to late March. Others, not to be outdone, have also pushed forward. The effect will be to squeeze the real primary campaign into less than eight weeks. Primaries after California are likely to be meaningless, unless – as may just be possible – the Republican race becomes the tightest in recent history.

The lacklustre Republican field has led to speculation that someone else – General Colin Powell? – may be "drafted" by the party (i.e. picked by bosses) at the last moment. This used to be common. As recently as 1968, Hubert Humphrey won the Democratic nomination without entering a single primary.

The tighter rules now make this very difficult, if not quite impossible. On the first ballot at the convention, all delegates must vote according to the primary results in their state (or any deals made to reallocate the delegates of fallen candidates). Only on the second ballot are they free to vote for whichever candidate they like.

All of the above applies, of course, only to the major-party candidates. A well-heeled independent, such as Ross Perot, can join the race at any time and save his energy and money for the final campaign, which traditionally starts on Labour Day (2 September).

There is one other important fact to remember. US presidential elections are not a single, nation-wide battle for the popular vote. They are, in effect, mini-elections in each of the 50 states (and Washington DC). The candidate first past the post scoops all that state's delegates to the Electoral College (which, technically, picks the president later in the year). The number of Electoral College votes is allocated according to the size of the state. The effect of all this is to concentrate the final campaign in the 20 or so large, politically balanced states, rich in Electoral College votes, such as California or Illinois. No presidential candidate bothers going to Alaska, or even North Dakota.

JOHN LICHFIELD

Finances and funding

Why money is the first primary

Money offers no guarantee of success in a US presidential election. But a lack of money does ensure failure.

Take the contenders for this year's Republican nomination. Bob Dole and Phil Gramm raised more than $20m (£13.3m) each last year. Steve Forbes has put up $25m from his own family fortune. Lamar Alexander raised $10.5m; Pat Buchanan $6.5m; and the rest – Richard Lugar, Bob Dornan and Alan Keyes – have scraped barely $6m between them.

Messrs Lugar, Dornan and Keyes are completely out of the running. Why they continue to compete, in the knowledge that humiliation will be their only reward, is a mystery. Small wonder that political operatives say that "money is the first primary".

How much does it cost to be president? Or even to fail to become president? A candidate's overt spending on a primary campaign can be up to $35m. The federal government funds the campaigns of the major parties in the autumn to the tune of $60m each. But something like the same again is required in so-called "soft" expenditure, which evades the official limits and has to be raised from private – mostly business – donors. Failed primary campaigns included, the total cost of this year's race could be well over $400m, by far the most expensive in American history.

Of the five serious Republican contenders, Mr Gramm provides the most compelling evidence that it is not enough in itself to be a great fund-raiser. It was Mr Gramm who boasted that he had the most "reliable friend in American politics – money".

But he lags way behind Mr Dole and Mr Forbes in the polls.

The first lesson of the Forbes fairy story, on the other hand, is that if you can afford to blitz the airwaves with campaign advertising impossible dreams might come true. The second lesson is that while Mr Forbes's appeal derives in part from his simple "flat-tax" message, it also comes from projecting himself as a political *ingénu* free of the taint of Washington dirty money.

Opinion polls may fluctuate but one poll result that remains steady is Americans' dissatisfaction with a system of government that rewards special interests above the man and woman on the street. The "special interests" are the corporations that provide election candidates with 70 per cent of the funds necessary to sell themselves on television and radio.

While Mr Forbes is himself a walking corporation, the advantage he enjoys over his rivals is that he owes no favours to anybody but himself. Mr Dole and Mr Gramm and Mr Alexander have spent the last year scrounging from people who fully expect a reward for their investment. The same goes for Mr Clinton, who has managed to accumulate a campaign war-chest of $27m.

Mr Clinton's decision last month to veto a bill which would have damaged the interests of wealthy lawyers was not unconnected, for example, with a dinner in the White House a few days earlier attended by wealthy lawyers who had contributed more than $100,000 to the Democratic campaign fund.

Mr Dole and Mr Gramm, senators both, have raised as much money as they have because their legislative track-record is peppered with votes in favour of bills which have improved the profits of their corporate backers. Their admirers, like Mr Clinton's admirers, say they are all fundamentally honest men trapped by the misfortune of operating within a bad system. Yet it is a system which none of the parties displays any great zeal to change. Which is why Mr Forbes – who has not yet had the opportunity to change anything – is doing better than expected, and why the race for the White House remains, first and foremost, a race for the big money.

JOHN CARLIN

The race for Congress

The other battlegrounds of 1996

This will go down as the year not so much of loathing Congress, but of leaving it. Americans' disdain for their legislators is well known – indeed, most of the Republican presidential candidates are running against Congress no less than against President Bill Clinton. Overshadowed inevitably by the contest for the White House, congressional elections too are taking place on 5 November, to replace the entire House of Representatives and a third of the Senate. And perhaps the most striking fact is how many familiar faces have opted to retire instead.

By the end of last month, 38 sitting Congressmen (25 of them Democrats) and a record 13 Senators (eight of them Democrats and almost all of them moderates) had announced they would not run. The reasons they give are invariably the same: exasperation at the increasingly polarised, partisan nature of the place after the "Republican revolution" of 1994, and, at least among Democrats, frustration at being in the minority.

But in 1996 that could change, in one chamber at least on Capitol Hill. Two years ago the Republicans gained 52 seats, to gain control of the House for the first time since Eisenhower's day, a Democratic armageddon seeming to prove America had moved irreversibly to the right. But despite the calamity, the Democrats need a net gain this time of only 14 seats to overturn the 230-204 Republican majority (the remaining seat is held by an independent). The shift under way in the South from Democrats to Republicans would seem to argue otherwise; but the strident, grating personality of Newt Gingrich, the Speaker, the perceived extremism of his followers and the wrangle over the budget have broken the Republican spell. Once again a majority of Americans tell pollsters they will vote Democrat for Congress in 1996.

In the Senate the arithmetic is easier for the Democrats, but the reality more difficult. Of the 33 seats up this year, 15 are held by Democrats, 18 by Republicans. To gain parity (and thus the edge, assuming Mr Clinton wins and Al Gore remains Vice-President, with the tie-breaking vote), the Democrats need just three more seats. Instead, they seem bound to lose three in the South – in Louisiana, Alabama and Arkansas – and conceivably a fourth in Georgia. In New Jersey, Minnesota, Illinois and Michigan they face tough battles.

And then there is the most glamorous Congressional race of all in 1996, in Massachusetts.

In a veritable Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe of politics, the Democrat John Kerry is being challenged by the state's popular Republican Governor, William Weld. Both men ooze class (Weld is married to a descendant of Teddy Roosevelt; Kerry is a scion of a "Boston Brahmin" family). Both are mentioned as future presidential candidates, and both are rich – Weld is a wealthy lawyer; Kerry is married to Teresa Heinz, the grocery heiress, worth an estimated $650m (£430m). At the start of the year, the polls gave Kerry a slight edge, but the result is a toss-up.

By contrast, most of the 18 Republican-held seats look safer. Intra-party feuding could undermine John Warner in Virginia, while Jesse Helms, that scourge of liberals, gays and foreigners, could have trouble in North Carolina. But the real action is just to the South. Can Strom Thurmond, 93 years young, win an eighth term, which, if completed, would on 5 December 2002 make him the first centenarian senator in US history? So much for term limits.

At the governors' level, 1996 is a relatively quiet year. Only 11 governorships are up in 1996, the most important of them in Indiana, Washington state, Missouri and North Carolina – all held by Democrats. Jim Hunt, the longest-serving governor in the US, looks impregnable in North Carolina, as does Mel Carnahan in Missouri.

But in Indiana and Washington, the Republicans have clear opportunities to increase their current 30-19 grip on the nation's statehouses (Maine's governor is an independent).

RUPERT CORNWELL

Runners and riders in the White House stakes

LAMAR ALEXANDER
Everyone's Republican dark horse – except that as of *Louisiana's eve, the beast was hardly* raising a trot
Ladbrokes odds: 20-1

On paper, the ex-governor of Tennessee and much-admired Education Secretary in the Bush administration, 55 years young, dazzling pianist and happy warrior against Washington, is the most attractive candidate in the field and, many believe, the one with the best chance of beating Bill Clinton in November.

His views are conservative but undogmatic. Alexander is a forthright budget-balancer but no flat-taxer. But his striving for the common touch (he really did walk across New Hampshire in his trademark red-and-black plaid shirt to meet ordinary voters) is apt to make him look a lightweight fraud. He is underfunded by the standards set by his rivals and, it would appear, under-advised. His slogan – "You'll go far with Lamar" – may fit his back-to-the-1950s image but it falls flat in the slick 1990s. With polls giving him scarcely 10 per cent, he must keep his head above water early on, do well in New England on 5 March and then score big in Florida on Super Tuesday. Assuming all of the above, he could yet make it. But it's a huge 'If'.

PAT BUCHANAN
Eloquent anger can take you only so far in politics
Ladbrokes odds: 100-1

The 57-year-old conservative commentator and former Nixon/Reagan speechwriter earned his niche in election history four years ago.

Arguably, his challenge in the primaries scared George Bush out of the presidency, forcing the Republicans rightward and allowing Bill Clinton to seize the middle ground and win. Now the lovable old bruiser is at it again.

Charming and caustic as ever, he excoriates Nafta (the North American Free Trade Area), and foreigners of every hue, lambasts gun control and is courting the religious right with the toughest anti-abortion stance. Pat may be preening himself after his victory in last week's Alaska straw poll; he may do very well in the Louisiana caucuses tonight; but, alas, 1996 is not 1992. Where it matters, in Iowa and New Hampshire, the "Buchanan Brigades" are a shadow of their old selves. In a field brimming with economic and social conservatives, he is unlikely to top 10 per cent. With his funds limited, he could be out of the race by Super Tuesday. The nomination? Forget it. But politics' loss will be the talk-circuit's gain.

PHIL GRAMM
Living proof that in politics, charm is unnecessary
Ladbrokes odds: 14-1

Even his wife, Wendy Lee, admits she couldn't stand him the first time he approached her. But Phil Gramm, 53, is nothing if not persistent. He won Wendy, won a seat in Congress as a Southern Democrat, switched to the Republicans, moved on to the Senate and won bigger still.

With his peering turtle's eyes and harsh Texas drawl, he will never make the White House on looks or laughs. But no one can hammer an issue like Gramm – right now the balanced budget. He also has the thickest skin in Congress and the sharpest eye for publicity. No hypocrisy is too rank for Gramm in the pursuit of electoral office, and the most dangerous place on Capitol Hill, runs the joke, is between Phil Gramm and a television camera. He boasts money, good staff and a strategy: survive in Iowa and New Hampshire, do well in Arizona and Delaware, and then clean up in the South and West, where his austere economic conservatism plays well. But isn't there enough of that in Newt Gingrich's Congress already? Phil Gramm is surely another Mr 10 per cent. Look for him to throw in the towel by April at the latest.

obituaries / gazette

Shamus Culhane

"Heigh-ho! Heigh-ho! It's home from work we go!" sang the seven little men as they marched through the forest and over a fallen tree after a hard day's dig in their diamond mine. All except Dopey, the last in line. "He don't talk none," explained Doc the dwarf. "He don't know how – he never tried!" Walt Disney's first feature-length cartoon, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1938), meant so much to me as a boy cartoonist that I knew it by heart, singing myself to sleep as I re-ran it in my mind's-eye movie palace night after night. What I never knew were the names of the animators whose magic pens drew that wonderful film. We need more cartoonists among our film critics.

Shamus Culhane was the animator responsible for that long walk home, perhaps the last of the great cartoonists who pioneered the 20th-century art of the animated film, working his way from boy assistant right through to writer/director, from short film to features to television series.

James Culhane (the Shamus came later) was born in Ware, Massachusetts, in 1908. When the family moved to Manhattan, Mr Culhane took his six-year-old son Jimmy to the local vaudeville theatre, where he saw the miracle of drawings come to life. On stage came the small figure of a famous cartoonist, Winsor McCay, who showed a huge cartoon picture that suddenly moved. This was the star of his 1914 film *Gertie the Dinosaur* who not only did whatever stunt he ordered, she seemed to pluck a pumpkin from his hand and eat it.

Inspired to become a comic artist, young Jimmy entered the annual art contest held by Wanamaker's department store and won a silver medal; 5,999 other children were disappointed. This was 1919, and Jimmy had just turned 11. From elementary school he went to the Vocational School for Boys in Harlem, the only one in the city with a course in commercial art. But his father ran away from home, and Jimmy left school early at 16 to help with the family income. A classmate lent him a hand: Mike Lantz, a youth with ambitions to be a sculptor, took him to see his older brother Walter. They showed him some of Jimmy's cartoons and Walter Lantz, then the 22-year-old chief of the Bray Animation Studio, immediately gave him a job, as an office boy. It was the first step to a career in animated cartoons that would span some 60 years.

Culhane learned the thrill of seeing his static drawings come alive on the screen when he was given the chance to animate a short sequence showing a monkey wrestling with a hot towel. At 16 he was, he said, "the happiest animator in New York". The happiness was short-lived: the Bray studio suddenly closed and the staff were on the streets.

Culhane immediately applied to the nearby Harrison-Gould Studio, who made Krazy Kat cartoons, based on the newspaper strip by George Herriman. They admired the neatness of Culhane's samples and signed him up. The pay was $35 a week, $10 more than Bray had paid him. Culhane, who had been considering leaving animation, quickly changed his mind. However his new career as inker and gag man was somewhat spoiled by the studio's cut-price methods. Their films were padded by repeat actions. "If you had a gag where somebody was hit by something, you automatically had it happen three times, using the same drawings over again!"

The seven dwarfs on the march in *Snow White* (1938). The film was Disney's biggest ever gamble and Culhane's first job for the studio

Then came a shock that rocked the industry. Walt Disney showed his first cartoon with a soundtrack, *Steamboat Willie* (1928), starring Mickey Mouse. The Krazy Kat company scoffed, but a year later succumbed to the talkie craze and made their first attempt. "It sounded like a tornado in a boiler factory," Culhane recalled. "When the Kat blinked, somebody struck a cowbell. When she walked her footsteps were accented by a bass drum. It was sheer cacophony!"

In 1930 the studio moved to Hollywood and left Culhane behind. He walked round to the Fleischer Brothers studio and was offered $50 a week. Max, the genial producer, appeared at the start of every *Out of the Inkwell* cartoon, drawing Koko the Clown. His brother Dave, the director, dressed in clown's costume and via Max's invention, the Rotoscope, was turned into the cartoon. "Dave was a great gag man. His motto was a gag in every foot whether it suited the storyline or not," said Culhane. When rumours of impending closure were whispered, many of Fleischer's top animators quit. Max immediately promoted all his trainees, including Culhane, into full animators, trying them out on a musical, *Swing You Sinners* (1930). When it was premiered it stole the reviews from Eddie Cantor, one critic calling it "a gem of a cartoon".

Culhane stayed at Fleischer's for some while, working on the saucy series of shorts starring Betty Boop, the big-eyed boop-a-doop girl based on the popular singer Helen Kane. He particularly enjoyed drawing Betty's long legs and daringly nippled bust. "Betty was a good girl," he recalled, "with a hymen like a boilerplate!".

Culhane's career covered almost every studio in the book. In 1932 he went west to work for Ubbe Iwerks, Disney's top animator who had set up on his own. Here Culhane animated Flip the Frog and Willie Whopper, plus some delightful Comicolor cartoons including *Puss in Boots* (1934). He was flown to London to meet Alexander Korda, who wanted him to set up an animation studio for his London Film Company. Unfortunately for history the money was not good enough and Culhane flew home.

Next came work at the Van Beuren company, back in New York. In charge was Burt Gillett which was enough to lure Culhane. Gillett was renowned in the industry as the uncredited director of Disney's *Three Little Pigs* (1933), which had become the world's best-known and most seen cartoon. Culhane worked on several of their *Rainbow Parade* series.

In 1935 he joined the Disney studio, which was burgeoning. Wanting to be part of the world's greatest animation studio at any cost, he took an enormous salary cut, virtually starting afresh at $50 a week. But even he was dismayed when Disney's report on his trial work included, "He should start all over and learn our way." His first attempt at animating Pluto, Mickey's pup, leaping over a fence was unceremoniously thrown in the waste-paper basket. Eventually he succeeded with a scene between Pluto and a cocky crab in *Hawaiian Holiday* (1937). The short won an award and Disney moved Culhane on to his studio's biggest ever gamble, the feature-length *Snow White*, where his first job was devising the dwarfs' musical march from diamond mine to cottage home.

Snow White's success inspired the Fleischer brothers to set up a brand new studio in Florida where they embarked on their own feature cartoon, *Gulliver's Travels* (1939). Culhane rejoined the brothers to work on this film, then became a full director at last with a short starring the popular spinach-eating sailor, *Popeye Meets William Tell* (1940). Next he directed the opening sequence of *Mr Bug Goes To Town* (1941), the Fleischers' second and final feature film, released in the UK as *Hoppity Goes To Town*.

Culhane now rejoined his first ever boss, Walter Lantz, who was having great success with his new and zany cartoon star, Woody Woodpecker. After directing *Pass the Biscuits Mirandy* (1943), he was given Woody to direct in a classical music parody, *The Barber of Seville* (1944). In this, Lantz's most expensive short (cost $16,717), Culhane applied live action editing methods he had studied in Pudovkin's classic book *Film Technique*. With Woody's ever faster rendition of the Factotum song, and ever more insane haircutting, the film became Culhane's masterpiece.

By 1966 Culhane was senior enough a figure to lease the Paramount-Famous Studios in New York, where he supervised the production of 20 cartoon shorts, and entered the expanding world of children's television with a series called *The Mighty Four*. There were commercials for Ajax the Foaming Cleanser and a parody of Mae West for Muriel Cigars: "Come up and smoke me sometime!" Ten years later he was producing animation specials for ABC Television, including *The Last of the Red Hot Dragons*. This was his final curtain. In 1986 he wrote his autobiography, *Talking of Animals and Other People*, a veritable history of cartoon films and their animators.

Culhane married twice. His first wife was Maxine Marx, the daughter of Chico Marx.

Denis Gifford

James (Shamus) Culhane, animator: born Ware, Massachusetts 12 November 1908; twice married (two sons); died New York 2 February 1996.

Sir Archibald Ross

Archibald Ross ended a distinguished diplomatic career as ambassador first to Portugal, from 1961 to 1966, and then to Sweden, from 1966 to 1971. He was in many ways typical of the old style of diplomat but none the less effective for it.

His father had been in the Indian Civil Service and there was a strong family tradition of government service. Archie was a scholar of Winchester and of New College, Oxford, where he took Firsts in Mods and Greats and won the Gaisford Prize for Greek Verse; he also won the Laming Travelling Fellowship at Queen's. When he took the pre-war Foreign Office examination in 1936, he passed in top.

His diplomatic career was somewhat narrow in the sense that he served always in the Foreign Office or in regular embassies abroad in Europe or the Middle East. He never served in a post involving multilateral diplomacy or in Washington or Paris, nor did he ever go further east than Iran. So he served successively at Stockholm, Tehran and Rome, with intervening periods in London in increasingly senior capacities until his appointment as ambassador to Lisbon at the age of 50. After five years there he was happy to spend his final five years as ambassador at Stockholm.

I served with and under Archie Ross in Rome 40 years ago. I could not have had a more agreeable and helpful colleague, generous in his support and available to give advice from his much greater experience. He could be counted on to carry out his instructions with care and accuracy and to promote British policies persuasively. Before coming to Rome as Minister (no 2) he had been head of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, a very demanding job at the time of our then difficulties with Iran. Rome was no doubt a reward for his success in that department and he and his wife, Mary, herself something of a paragon as ambassadress who preserved her good looks to an advanced age, enjoyed their time there, entertaining in an elegant little house overlooking the baths of Caracalla. Archie played a useful role over Trieste in the inter-regnum between Victor Mallet and Ashley Clarke. Later when he was an under-secretary at the Foreign Office he could chalk up a success over Cyprus in 1959.

Ross was regarded by some as ultra-conventional. He was indeed extremely correct in his demeanour and appearance on all official occasions. Nor did he fail to show all the minor old-fashioned courtesies which form part of diplomatic intercourse. But he was not without humour – sometimes concealed well beneath the surface – and he responded to teasing about his addiction to protocol.

I used to see Archie Ross at least once a year at the annual service of the Order of St Michael and St George in St Paul's Cathedral. His loud "Amen" after the prayer for members of the order reflected his own beliefs. I cannot imagine him enjoying any career other than service to the Crown. His sense of duty was immensely strong.

Alistair Campbell

Ross: sense of duty

Archibald David Manisty Ross, diplomat: born 12 October 1911; HM Minister, Rome 1953-56; CMG 1953, KCMG 1961; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 1956-60; Ambassador to Portugal 1961-66; Ambassador to Sweden 1966-71; married 1939 Mary Macfadyen (one son, one daughter, and one son deceased); died 25 January 1996.

Bernard Phillips

Bernard Phillips was for more than a generation a doyen of the insolvency profession.

The youngest of five children, he was raised by his Jewish immigrant parents in the East End of London. Whilst medicine fascinated him, perhaps as a result of his tuberculosis as a child, economic necessity had him articled at 16 and a chartered accountant at 21. He joined his elder brother, Percy, and built an accounting practice that, by the 1950s, represented to the business community of the West End what Kenneth and Norman Cork's practice, Cork Gully, represented to the City. In his early practising years Phillips decided to wear clear spectacles because he appeared too young for his qualifications and evident ability.

During the 1950s and 1960s the burgeoning fashion industry had many casualties, but there were few of its members who did not receive voluntarily, or otherwise, the benefits of the skills of the Phillips brothers, two of the first company doctors. Bernard Phillips's enduring contribution was to the institutionalisation of a small group of accountants specialising in insolvency work. He recognised the need to co-ordinate the skills and learning of a few unregulated specialists into a dynamic professional body. His determination to excise any "cowboy" elements and develop a respected next generation of practitioners was visionary.

In 1982 he was uniquely honoured with the presidency of the Insolvency Practitioners Association having just a few years earlier been its chairman. He was largely responsible for protecting the multi-disciplinary insolvency profession from an attempted takeover by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, a misguided power play which he sensed would always remain a threat. Paradoxically, earlier in his career he had resisted pressure to become a barrister so as not to lose his valued chartered accountancy qualification – a sacrifice that today would no longer be necessary.

Bernard Phillips and Company was the stable which trained many of today's leading insolvency practitioners, including John Talbot at Arthur Andersen, Chris Morris at Touche Ross and Phillips's own son Peter at Buchler Phillips.

In 1979 his firm joined Arthur Andersen to form that international organisation's first insolvency division. In Ian Hay Davison, Arthur Andersen's then managing partner, Bernard Phillips found a kindred spirit; pioneering, creative, forceful and articulate. The Law Society regularly sent its members to watch Phillips conduct meetings of creditors to hone their public speaking skills.

Phillips's contributions extended well beyond those to his profession. In his early years as a formidable atheist intellect and powerful orator and debater, he was a member of the Hampstead Parliament (a debating society), once famously having taken on the role of the Communist Chancellor of the Exchequer presenting his Budget.

For many years he worked for the Peckham Settlement, with Lady Howe of Aberavon and Maureen Davison. The settlement runs a community centre for local residents in Peckham, south London, including a low-pay nursery, pensioners club and advice centre. Phillips also did voluntary work for the Mary Ward Settlement in Bloomsbury, offering financial advice at weekly surgeries.

Retirement from Arthur Andersen at the age of 74 gave him time, much of which he committed to two Sussex charities, the Lionel House Trust (a home for young people), of which he was a founder, and Worthing Victim Support, of which he was immediate past chairman.

An active man in every respect, Bernard Phillips was jet-skiing in his beloved Cyprus on his 80th birthday, he attended his last Labour Party Conference in October last year and performed on a local stage at Ferring, West Sussex, in lycra leggings only three weeks before his death.

Phillips: articulate

G. A. Weiss

Bernard Phillips, insolvency practitioner: born Liverpool 7 October 1914; senior partner, Bernard Phillips and Company 1952-82; senior insolvency consultant, Arthur Andersen 1982-88; President, Insolvency Practitioners Association 1982; married 1938 Pat Clayton (one son, one daughter; marriage dissolved 1963), 1964 Lillian Tavendale (two daughters); died Worthing 24 January 1996.

Roy Cuthbertson

Fertilisation of the egg is said to be the only aspect of cell biology familiar to the lay person. But how, precisely, does a sperm switch on the egg, a thousand-fold bigger, to start the cell divisions that result in formation of the early embryo? Roy Cuthbertson showed in 1985 that the sperm induces the egg to generate a series of brief rises in the calcium level in the egg; these calcium "spikes" are a mandatory signal for egg development.

Just two weeks ago, a few days after Cuthbertson's death, a London group reported in the scientific journal *Nature* that they had identified a protein which is injected into the egg by the sperm and which is responsible, somehow, for initiating the calcium spiking.

Cuthbertson: spiking

Cuthbertson's 1985 discovery, also published in *Nature*, was fundamental to the identification of the sperm protein.

Roy Cuthbertson was born in 1954 and educated at Tonbridge and King's College, Cambridge, where he read Mathematics; he then took an MSc in Genetics at University College London. He began his research career with D.G. Whittingham in the Mammalian Development Unit at UCL.

He gained his doctorate in 1981 and after a year at Harvard came to Liverpool University determined to take on the technical challenge of measuring the egg's calcium levels during fertilisation. He used an extract from a luminous jellyfish that glowed when given calcium. By injecting this extract into an egg and measuring the glow from the egg with light-detecting instruments he showed that a fertilised egg generates about 12 brief spikes in its calcium level over the three-hour period after the sperm binds. A year later, with Niall Woods and myself, he used the same technique to show, much to everyone's surprise (except his own), that a liver cell responds to several hormones by generating calcium spikes. In these cells the calcium spiking switches on the release of glucose into the bloodstream, not cell division.

This work, again published in *Nature*, firmly established his reputation in cell signalling internationally and he was awarded a Royal Society 1983 University Research Fellowship.

Cuthbertson had the intellect, confidence and determination to forge his own path in science; not for him the easy next step, or following the latest fashionable topic. All he lacked was time, as the leukaemia which he had battled against for several years overwhelmed him.

Roy Cuthbertson was a cellist with the Chester Philharmonic Orchestra, and an active campaigner for the Green Party. His concern for the planet's problems befits a scientist who contributed much to our understanding of the cellular events that initiate human procreation.

Peter Cobbold

Kevin Siward Roy Cuthbertson, cell biologist and mathematician: born Sevenoaks 2 May 1954; Royal Society 1983 University Research Fellow, Liverpool University 1987-96; married Anne Tebbs (one son, one daughter); died Liverpool 11 January 1996.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

DOWNES: On 31 January, to Carol (née Fox) and Nick, a son, Jack.

DEATHS

FREUDENBERG: Elisabeth (née Lubowsky), at Pennant Nursing Home, Somerset, wife of the late Konrad Freudenberg, mother of *Elizabeth, Matthew, Anna and Veronica*. Service at Taunton Deane Crematorium on Thursday 8 February at 2.30pm. Donations if desired to Oxfam. Enquiries m E. White & Son Ltd, Funeral Directors, Taunton, telephone 01823 272183.

MORRISON: Lady Morrison. Rosemary (Hannah Mary), formerly de Groot, née Topping, aged 82, in Oxford, after a short illness, 4 February 1996. Widow of Sir Nicholas Morrison KCB, and of Emile H.U. de Groot, and dearly loved mother of Joanna and Lucy.

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

RUSSELL-COBB: Trevor. Funeral at Golders Green Crematorium, Wednesday 7 February, 12.30pm, and not as previously announced.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 or faxed to 0171-293 2010.

Birthdays

The Right Rev Edwin Barnes, Bishop Suffragan of Richborough, 61; **Mr Mike Batt**, composer and arranger, 46; **Rabbi Lionel Blue**, broadcaster, 66; **Mr Nicholas Brett**, Editor, *Radio Times*, 46; **Sir Denys Buckley**, former Lord Justice of Appeal, 90; **Mr Peter Cadbury**, former company chairman, 78; **Mr Leslie Crowther**, comedian and quizmaster, 63; **Mr John Flemming**, Warden, Wadham College, Oxford, 55; **Miss Zsa Zsa Gabor**, actress, 76; **Mr Tom Harris**, ambassador to Korea, 51; **Dr Christopher Hill**, former Master, Balliol College, Oxford, 84; **Miss Gayle Hunnicutt**, actress, 53; **Professor Nevil Johnson**, Reader in the Comparative Study of Institutions, Oxford University, 67; **Mr Patrick McNee**, actor, 74; **Mr George Mudie** MP, 51; **Mr Denis Norden**, writer and broadcaster, 74; **Mr Manuel Orantes**, tennis player, 47; **Mr Ronald Reagan**, former US president, 85; **Lord Roskill**, former Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 85; **Mr Mark Sheldon**, solicitor, and former president, Law Society of England and Wales, 65; **Mr Brian Simpson**, MEP, 43; **Mr Jimmy Tarbuck**, comedian, 56; **Mr Fred Trueman**, cricketer, 65; **Mr Keith Waterhouse**, writer, 67; **Mr Kevin Whately**, actor, 45.

Anniversaries

Births: Christopher Marlowe, playwright, 1564; Mrs Isabella Mary Beeton (Maysoo), cookery writer, 1865; George Herman ("Babe") Ruth, baseball player, 1895; François Truffaut, film director, 1932. **Deaths:** King Charles II, 1685; Lancelot "Capability" Brown, landscape gardener, 1783; Gustav Klimt, painter, 1918; Arthur Ashe, tennis player, 1993. **On this day:** James II acceded to the throne of Great Britain, 1685; an Act of Parliament granted votes for British women over 30, 1918; Queen Elizabeth II succeeded to the throne, 1952; agreement was reached between Britain and France on a Channel Tunnel, 1964. **Today** is the National Day of New Zealand and the Feast Day of St Amand, St Guarinus of Palestrina, St Hildegund, Saints Mel and Melchu, St Paul Miki and his Companions and St Vedast or Vaast.

Lectures

Victoria and Albert Museum: David Anderson, "Narrative Art in the Middle Ages", 2.30pm.

Tate Gallery: Jan Marsh, "Black Images in Pre-Raphaelite Painting", 1pm.

Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution, London N6: John Mead, "What Agenda for Our Childreo?", 7.45pm.

RIBA Architecture Centre, London W1: Mario Bellini, "Urban Islands – architectural works of Mario Bellini", 6.30pm.

Exeter University: Professor Michael Rush, "From Gentlemen to Players: changing career patterns and roles of MPs", 1.10pm.

London School of Economics, London WC2: Gavyn Davies, "Is European Monetary Unioo Feasible or Desirable by 1999?", 5.30pm.

Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, London EC1: Professor Peter Hennessy, "Centre Forward, Centre Half: Harold Wilson 1964-70, 1974-76", 1pm.

Lavinia, Duchess of Norfolk

A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Lavinia, Duchess of Norfolk LG will be held in the Cathedral of Our Lady and St Philip Howard, Arundel, at 2.30pm, on Friday 1 March 1996. Admission is by ticket only. Please apply to the Dover House, Poling, Arundel, West Sussex BN18 9PX, by 12 February 1996.

Luncheons

Ministry of Defence

Field Marshal Sir Peter Inge, Chief of the Defence Staff, was the host at a luncheon held yesterday in Admiralty House, London SW1, in honour of Admiral Antonio Carlos Fuzeta da Ponte, Chief of Defence General Staff, Portugal.

Royal Over-Seas League

Dr Alan Sked, Leader, UK Independence Party, spoke at a meeting of the Royal Over-Seas League's Discussion Circle held yesterday evening at Over-Seas House, London SW1. His subject was "Could Britain Afford to be Independent Today?"

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Prince of Wales visits the "Design of the Times" exhibition and attends a Centenary Dinner at the Royal College of Art, London SW7. The Duke of Kent attends a reception for the Transnet Libertas Choir of South Africa, hosted by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Marlborough House, London SW1. Princess Alexandra visits the Cassel Hospital, Richmond, Surrey.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Infested cargo was dangerous to other ships

Effort Shipping Co Ltd v Linden Management SA and another; Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Hirst, Lord Justice Morritt and Lord Justice Ward); 30 January 1996

LAW REPORT

6 February 1996

A cargo of processed nuts infested at shipment with a tropical beetle of voracious appetite was, in terms of article IV, rule 6 of the Hague Rules, "dangerous" to other feedstuff cargoes in the same vessel so as to make the shipper liable to the carrier for damages arising out of the need to destroy the infested cargo and fumigate the ship.

The Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal by the second defendant shipper, Sonacos, against the decision of Mr Justice Longmore ([1994] 2 Lloyd's Rep 171) that it was liable to the plaintiff shipowner, Effort Shipping Co Ltd, for damages of $477,848.38 plus interest.

Edmond Broadbent (Richards Butler) for the shipper; Alistair Schaff (Bentleys Stokes & Lowless) for the plaintiff.

Lord Justice Hirst said the action arose out of the shipment of a cargo of ground-nut extraction meal pellets by the shipper at Dakar in Senegal, for carriage to Rid Haina in the Dominican Republic, in one hold of the plaintiff's vessel *Giannis NK*. The bill of lading incorporated the Hague Rules. The ship was carrying two cargoes of wheat pellets in other holds.

The ground-nut cargo was at the time of shipment infested with Khapra Beetle (*Trogoderma Granarium Everts*) which in its larval form was voracious and would rapidly devour a cargo of feedstuffs. As a result, the cargo was rejected at destination and both the ground-nuts and the wheat pellets eventually had to be dumped at sea and the ship chemically fumigated, causing loss and delay to the plaintiff.

The judge concluded that the shipper was liable under article IV, rule 6 of the Hague Rules, which provided:

Goods of an inflammable, explosive or dangerous nature to the shipment whereof the carrier ... has not consented ... may at any time before discharge be landed at any place or destroyed or rendered innocuous by the carrier without compensation, and the shipper of such goods shall be liable for all damages and expenses directly or indirectly arising out of or resulting from such shipment.

The plaintiff had claimed that the ground-nut cargo was dangerous not only to the wheat cargoes, as the judge held, but also to the ship itself, which the judge rejected.

The shipper contended that, in order to qualify, goods must be inherently dangerous, and that was not so here. All that happened was that the United States Department of Agriculture issued a directive giving the owner the choice between removing the cargoes from the United States, returning them all to their country of origin or dumping them at sea 25 miles from shore, and for commercial reasons the plaintiff elected to do the latter. The danger thus flowed not from any inherent danger in the ground-nut cargo but from the plaintiff's choice.

The uncontradicted expert evidence showed that the remaining wheat cargo was unsaleable. His Lordship agreed with the plaintiff that the whole cargo, including the wheat, was blighted, and the decision to dump it all was in reality Hobson's Choice. Thus from the moment the ground-nut cargo was loaded, the wheat cargo was subjected to the physical peril of being dumped, and consequently the losses and expenses incurred thereafter by the plaintiff arose from the shipment of the infested cargo.

Were it necessary to decide the point, his Lordship would have been very reluctant to hold that the infested cargo presented any threat of physical danger to the ship itself, although the chemical fumigation which the ship was required to undergo amounted to more than mere routine cleaning, and did at least temporarily impair its usefulness. In the circumstances, however, the point did not arise.

His Lordship then rejected the shipper's argument that it was divested of liability by virtue of section 1 of the Bills of Lading Act 1855.

Paul Magrath, Barrister

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A very undiplomatic incident

The top woman in the Foreign Office is leaving. She is very angry. Was she pushed or did she jump? **Polly Toynbee** reports

The tale of two embassies

In Paris The Paris embassy is Britain's most expensive foreign mission. It was bought in 1814 for £36,000. Close to the Elysée Palace on the Faubourg St Honoré, it costs nearly £1.7m a year to run. Last year, British visitors to the embassy included three royals, 20 ministers and 57 MPs. The embassy's reputation is not all based on glamour. France has long seen itself as the source of political leadership in Europe, forging the idea of European integration, while Germany provided the economic might. In diplomatic circles it is certainly the chicest place to be an ambassador: the current US ambassador is Pamela Harriman, former wife of Randolph Churchill and the legendary US diplomat Averil Harriman.

In Bonn The pre-war British embassy in Berlin was described by the ambassador Sir Neville Henderson in 1938 as "cramped, dirty and dark". Soon after, it was razed to the ground by British bombing raids.

Although the embassy moved to Bonn after the war, its reputation has hardly improved. Its location, in a Fifties Ministry of Works building, is in stark contrast to its Paris cousin. Bonn is famously one of the dullest capitals in Europe, without the élan and glamour of Paris or even the food of Brussels. In 1999, the German government and the British embassy will move back to Berlin. It remains to be seen whether this will bring the embassy to a level of prestige matching that of Paris.

Where women are British ambassadors

"She's in a frightful bate," said a voice redolent of the Foreign Office. Such self-mocking use of old-fashioned public school patois suits this belittling of the highest-flying woman in the diplomatic service – Dame Pauline Neville-Jones.

Well, she is in a bate and she has every reason to be, according to her friends. Indeed, the angry fumes can be seen rising from her Chelsea house, where she has been sulking in her tent since December, quite understandably. For her head has just crashed against the glass ceiling and the sound of the collision is reverberating around the vaulted corridors and marbled stairwells of the Foreign Office.

She is speaking to no one. The news of her imminent departure from the second-highest post in the Foreign Office emerged from hostile leaking at the very top. Her friends are gleeful that it has rebounded sharply upon the head of Sir John Coles, the Permanent Under-Secretary, who, they say, has done her down. He does not like the public accusation of sexism at the top of the Foreign Office, and the Prime Minister is not pleased.

Pending the usual delicate negotiations over a severance deal, Dame Pauline will shortly leave the Foreign Office to join NatWest's investment banking department, specialising in Europe. Douglas Hurd, her old political boss, is already there, as a director and deputy chairman of NatWest Markets.

But she will leave the Foreign Office still as a Grade 2 and not in the expected Grade 1 position. (This, according to the First Division Association, will make some £200,000 difference to her pension over its expected lifetime, so it is not a matter of empty status.) Almost without exception, someone who has reached her post as political director, second only to the Permanent Under-Secretary, will be given a Grade 1 ambassadorial post – Paris, Bonn, Washington or Moscow. (One went to Rome, usually a Grade 2 post, but it was upgraded especially for him.) It is her failure to be given the Paris embassy, the plumb posting, that has led to her leaving prematurely and in anger.

Dame Pauline was effectively winkled out of her job as political director by Sir John despite having been promoted to it with

> She's suddenly a virago fit only for Bosnian battlefields, some kind of FO Annie Oakley

the express enthusiasm of the Prime Minister. Indeed, John Major has stepped into this fray, provoking further resentment from the embarrassed Sir John. "The Prime Minister has been remarkably kind and supportive to her," says one insider. It explains why she was made a Dame in the New Year's Honours List.

But when it was plain she was about to walk out and seek greener pastures elsewhere, the top brass became afraid they would be blamed for treating her badly and the high-level leaking began. She was said to be "difficult", "acerbic", "a bit outspoken" and "not absolutely a top-drawer brain, jolly good but more of a 2.1". The snake whispers are everywhere. To give a flavour of how these things are done in the poisonous corridors of power, take this classic leakage to the *Times* last month: "Those who have known her for years say that the efficient, strong-willed manner in which she conducts her affairs was invaluable in dealing with the turbulent Bosnians. But it hasn't proved sufficiently emollient for the niceties of diplomatic life." So, she's suddenly a virago fit only for Bosnian battlefields, some kind of Foreign Office Annie Oakley.

The world of diplomacy grows ever greyer, with everything done these days by committee, but Dame Pauline was a character with a touch of old-style panache. She has a pithy turn of phrase, unlike her more mealy-mouthed colleagues. She was outstandingly good as head of Britain's delegation at Dayton, Ohio, where the accords creating a Bosnian peace treaty were forged. Her confidential telegrams were predicted to "make vintage reading in 30 years' time", reflecting the shifting tensions between the European factions under pressure from the impatient Americans. She has an open, if sometimes slightly brittle, air – but mixed with a warmth that makes her remembered.

Once ousted as political director, the Prime Minister's chief foreign adviser, she wanted the Paris embassy. "Quite understandable," says an ex-Foreign Office hand. "In these days when we all take a pretty dim view of the ambassadorial function, at least you want to do it in an amusing place." The famously lavish and expensive splendours of the Paris embassy make it the most coveted prize of all. Liszt, Proust and Oscar Wilde dined there. It is usually reserved as the reward for one exactly in her position, as a last post. She is 56, and friends think it should have been hers to take her through to compulsory retirement at 60.

But she is a woman, and single. The job went to a man six years her junior, Michael Jay, an expert in European affairs – as is she. "Brilliant but desiccated," says one insider of him. "He looks as if he's walked straight from the Planet Boffin," another is reported to have said. "She would have made the French sit up and take notice," a friend says. "There is absolutely no doubt at all that if she had been a man, she would never have been passed over. It's unthinkable."

All this might seem like a rather petulant storm in a Whitehall glass of claret, since the leakers against her were quick to point out that she was offered the Bonn embassy. Surely Bonn is, if anything, more important diplomatically and economically than Paris? But they knew she didn't want it. She was deputy at Bonn until 1991 and didn't want to go over old ground. ("And, let's face it," says one ex-Foreign Office man, "the French are a great deal more congenial than the Germans.")

But more than that, the job wasn't available until late next year. That wouldn't have mattered if they had left her in post as political director. But Sir John, having effectively unseated her, then offered her what she regarded as crumbs in the mean time.

"They wanted her to faff around with Cyprus, but she'd have gone mad with frustration." Insult turned to injury when they refused to raise her to Grade 1. Here, the Prime Minister stepped in, and insisted she should at least get the top grade – but now instead she is going, in a huff.

She has reached a higher rank than any other woman ever and until now she has always said she never really found many serious obstacles in her career, little direct discrimination. But now she has fallen heavily at the last fence and most observers say it wouldn't have happened to a man.

Few men, apart from Catholic priests, ever have to dedicate themselves so single-mindedly to their career. The daughter of two doctors, after Leeds High

> The Prime Minister stepped in and insisted Dame Pauline should at least get the top grade

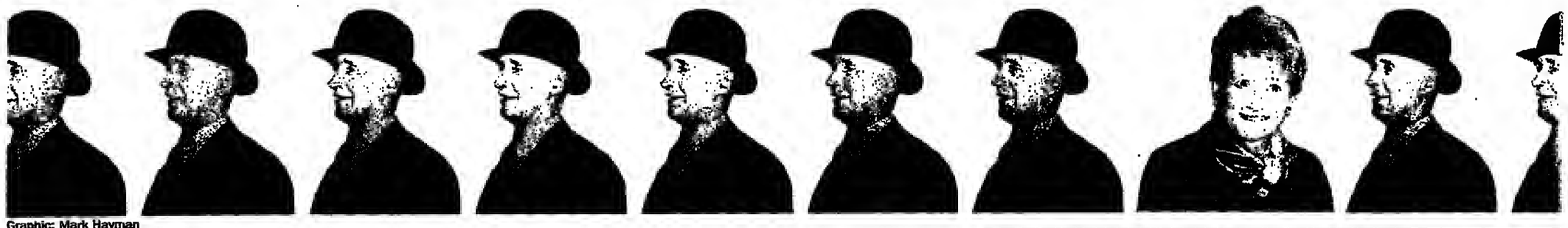
School, Pauline Neville-Jones won a scholarship to Oxford. But when she entered the Foreign Office in 1963 women were still limited to 10 per cent of the intake. They had to resign on marriage right up until 1972. It was only four years ago that the Diplomatic Service Wives' Association bothered to rename itself the Diplomatic Spouses Association, so rare were women, let alone women with husbands. After all, it is hard to find a portable husband willing to globe-trot perpetually, with little chance of independent employment. These days even men find it hard to procure such pliable wives.

So she always knew she had to choose between a lonely life of success, or a family and a different occupation. It makes the treatment she has received at the end of her career all the more shameful because she has made a far greater sacrifice than any of the men around her.

Only seven of 183 British embassies around the world have a woman ambassador. The number of women in the top three Foreign Office grades is falling: it was 3.4 per cent in 1994 but only 1 per cent in 1995. That compares badly with an already bad average across the Civil Service of 8.5 per cent.

Pauline Neville-Jones's story will do little to encourage others to follow in her footsteps. Her failure to win the Paris embassy appointment may look petty trivial to outsiders, but within the curious portals of the increasingly anachronistic Foreign Office to which she has devoted her life, these things matter a great deal.

Now, admit it, already you are asking yourself, well, what she up to it? Is she a trouble-maker? Is she too difficult? Top women who complain about their treatment always end up sounding spoilt and tiresome, playing the gender card as an act of aggrieved revenge. The angrier they get, the more the wise old heads nod and say, "There you are! Emotional, unreasonable!" But would they ever have made her political director, chief adviser to the Prime Minister, or chief British negotiator on Bosnia, signatory to the Dayton agreement, or head of running intelligence analysis from MI6, MI5 and GCHQ if she wasn't up to it? Ambassadors are increasingly empty vessels, so the Paris job is considerably less taxing than those other posts she has held. But the plum foreign posts are plainly still just jobs for the boys (and their wives).



Graphic: Mark Hayman

DIARY

Glossy game of I Spy

If Dame Stella Rimington, soon to retire as head of MI5, does not become the next Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge when Lord St John of Fawsley retires this summer, she can blame the society magazine *Harpers & Queen*.

Next month's edition of the glossy has infuriated the college

Dame Stella: delicate matter

by flagging an article on Oxbridge masterships – "Dame Stella Rimington is tipped to be next Master of Emmanuel – but is running an Oxbridge college the enviable job that it used to be?"

"That is both wrong and naughty," says the Master's secretary. "The election has not taken place yet. The governing body is still choosing candidates. The only reason for the suggestion is that it was reported that she came to a dinner at High Table last term."

Professor John Coates, who has been acting as vice-master and head of the selection procedure, confirms that this is the case. "It is a very delicate matter" he says "As we think of people or look at those who have applied we weigh up how valuable their input will be in three fields: education, teaching and research." And counter-espionage, surely.

Tory MP's teeny secret

Few MPs are as zealous as Peter Luff, the genial Tory who today introduces a Bill to get teenage girls' magazines certified like videos and restricted according to age. To win support within the Commons, he has, I hear, been carrying a few samples on his person. Woe betide any innocent bystander lurking in the lobbies and corridors. Before you can blink, Luff whisks out a copy of *More, Sugar, Bliss* or other lurid examples of the genre. The only problem that the MP for Worcester has encountered on his campaign trail has been back at home, with his 10-year-old daughter, Rosie, whose reading matter inspired his concern. "He is determined

Peter Luff: secret reading

not to let Rosie see these publications," explains his wife. "So every time she comes anywhere near, he dives into the garage and locks them in the boot of the car, and re-emerges rather red-faced."

Poor Rosie. If that isn't enough to confuse her, what is?

Prediction is a gamble

In a lecture to be given today at the Royal Geographical Society, Lord Rothschild, chairman of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, dispenser of National Lottery money to good causes, says that lottery turnover is running at £5bn a year, with good causes receiving £30m a week. How "wildly out", he notes, were the predictions of the Royal Commission on Gambling in 1979, which forecast a turnover of £100m a year and a £45m per annum contribution to good causes. How wildly out indeed was the Royal Commission on Gambling – chaired, as I recall, by the late Lord Rothschild, father of today's speaker.

Dame Shirley: mystery group of supporters

Baffled by propaganda

I must admit to being puzzled by a fax sent to me by the Westminster Supporters' Group. The document appears to be a piece of propaganda backing Dame Shirley Porter and her former Westminster Council cronies against the accusations of gerrymandering made by John Magill, the District Auditor. First, none of the current Tories on the council seems to know who the mysteriously anonymous "supporters" are – and there is not even a telephone number to respond to. There is an address – but in deepest Battersea, the wrong side of the river for a Westminster supporter.

Will the supporters reveal themselves?

Shirley some mistake ...

In his review of the biography of the newspaper proprietor Conrad Black in the *Mail on Sunday*, the journalist Peter McKay added a humorous postscript. He hopes, he says, that his opinion of Conrad Black is "unclouded by the remote possibility that they might one day be in an employer-employee situation".

That possibility must be even more remote now. McKay wrote that the most interesting part of the book concerned Black's first wife, Joanna, who later changed her name to Shirley. Mr Black, a stickler for accuracy, will certainly remember that his first wife was called Shirley, and later changed her name to Joanna.

Wizard of the guitar

I felt honoured to be the only newspaper person at a private party thrown at a night club that was decidedly off-Broadway by The Who's Pete Townshend for the cast of his musical *Tommy*, which opens next month. All the leading players took it in turns to jump up on stage and sing a rock or soul standard.

Not everyone managed to raise the rafters, but I spotted a definite star in the making: Nicola Hughes, who plays the acid queen. Her rendition of "Big Spender" was a great performance that crossed Shirley Bassey with Tina Turner.

The evening ends with the 18-year-old Tommy, Paul Keating, singing "Pinball Wizard". Accompanying him on acoustic guitar, and pointing manically, was a bald, middle-aged gentleman who I was told is a little hard of hearing.

I assume he is a gatecrasher and go to tell our host, only to discover ... Yes, it was Mr Townshend himself.

Eagle Eye

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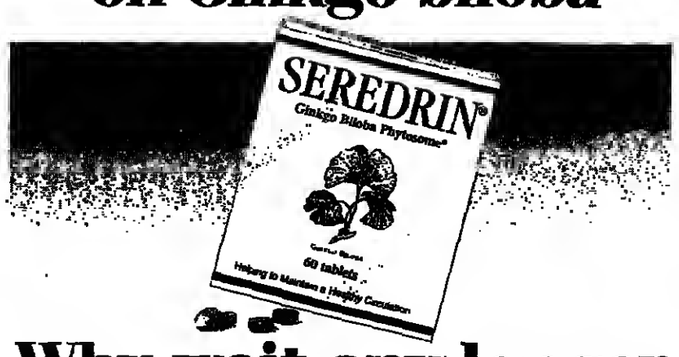

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Making bad schools better

There will be a thinly veiled sense of panic in many homes this morning as parents digest what the Government's chief inspector has to say about the state of our primary and secondary schools. It will be matched by a mixture of depression, anxiety and probably resentment among teachers in some of the many schools identified as underperforming.

The inspector, Chris Woodhead, the chief executive of Ofsted, concluded that standards need to be raised in half of primary schools and 40 per cent of secondary schools. Sounds awful, but it isn't all bad. About 200 schools were highlighted for standards which were "good, improving or outstanding". Excellent schools are spread across the country. They are not by any means all selective. Schools in very similar environments achieve widely differing results. As Mr Woodhead pointed out: "The most successful secondary schools achieve GCSE results twice as good as others in similar socio-economic circumstances."

So English schools are not overwhelmingly bad and they are not doomed to disaster by their funding structure, the background of their pupils or their admissions procedure. The question is how those underperforming schools can be brought closer to the standards of the best.

We should start with the quality of teachers. Thousands of teachers are not delivering. But sacking the worst teachers is at best only a small part of the solution. Bad teachers are far outnumbered by the mass which is hardworking, dedicated and often talented. We will only recruit and retain teachers of high quality once the profession is just that, a high-status career, highly regarded by society and rewarded in kind. We should demand high performance from teachers, but be ready to reward it when it is delivered.

Effective teaching is only possible within a well-managed school. Headteachers probably matter more than anyone else to improving the quality of a school. The best teacher in the world will not succeed in a demoralised and badly managed school. Headteachers should be given more special training to develop managerial and entrepreneurial skills.

However, a headteacher can only manage a school within an environment largely created by government and local authorities. There is a mounting case for shifting away from mixed ability teaching in all classes to more setting and streaming within comprehensive schools. Individual-oriented learning programmes should be balanced with whole class teaching and the traditional methods that still prevail on the Continent. And primary schools should not be distracted by too broad a national curriculum, with other social and moral tasks loaded on top. Every school should have the resources it needs to teach properly – that may mean that schools in problem areas with large numbers of difficult children will need extra funding.

The Secretary of State for Education, Gillian Shephard, responded to yesterday's report by promising to publish league tables for primary schools. This is not good enough. Tests, league tables and regular Ofsted reports are all useful: they monitor progress and help parents make choices. That may prompt some improvements. But our real aim must be to create a professional, motivated and well-managed body of teachers employing the right teaching techniques.

In defence of ugliness

In Britain we have only begun to recognise the allure of cosmetic surgery. In the United States, the likes of Marlene Dietrich, Bette Davis and their face-lifts are long dead. For Joan Crawford, plastic surgery was an essential: "Beauty may be only skin deep, but ugliness goes all the way to the bone."

It is not just women who are captivated by liposculpture, chemical peels, tummy tucks, collagen injections and silicon implants. Clark Gable's wives paid for his teeth to be rebuilt and eventually extracted *in toto* (they were so bad that Vivien Leigh hated kissing him in *Gone With The Wind*). Both Gable and Bing Crosby had their ears pinned back (glue did not work for Bing). The Kirk Douglas chin dimple is high on the menus of plastic surgeons in Beverly Hills and is just one feature of Michael Jackson's complex reconstruction as an android of uncertain origin.

Nineties Britain, in which the gym has for some become a new place of homage and the flat stomach the Holy Grail, should offer plenty of rich pickings for plastic surgeons. As Angus McGrouther, this country's first professor of plastic surgery, said in a speech last night, we should recognise how cosmetic surgery can transform a person's self-image.

We do not need to agree completely with the professor when he said: "Disfigurement is the last bastion of discrimination." Yet plastic surgery often does more than pander to vanity. It could dramatically improve the quality of life for many of the 2 million people who suffer some form of disfigurement.

The health service has better things to spend its money on than creating a better-looking nation. But that does not mean cosmetic surgery has no place in state-funded health care. Children, for example, can be cruelly taunted over disfigurements that can leave them emotionally wounded for life: a sympathetic attitude should be taken in funding their treatment. The removal of an unsightly and ill-judged tattoo might dramatically improve someone's job prospects.

Nor should we be censorious about surgery that it is privately paid for. A liberal society should allow adults to alter their bodies as they please, free from sneering.

The real risk with plastic surgery is not that it allows choice but that it is the bearer of homogeneity: beautiful people, with anodyne good looks, perfect smiles, straight noses and a persona modelled on soap operas from Australia or the West Coast of the US. One of the forces that is driving people to the surgeon's knife is an intolerance of difference.

If this social conformism had triumphed through the ages, imagine what would have become of portrait painting. Instead of the full character of the human face, warts and all, straining with effort, conveyed by the great Russian portrait painters such as Repin, we would have had rows of smiling lookalikes with fake tans. We should defend the right to be different, embrace diversity and take pleasure in what conformists regard as ugly.

• LETTERS TO THE EDITOR •

Personal involvement is what makes a good funeral

From The Rev Dr Paul Sheppy
Sir: I was interested to read letters from clergy suggesting that in their parishes care for the bereaved in the provision of funerals displayed the kind of good practice for which the National Funerals College is arguing. Martin Leigh (2 February) proposes some market research, implying that the results would be more positive than criticism based on anecdotal hearsay.

In the course of preparing my doctoral thesis, I had occasion to read some of the academic research relating to funerary care and provision. It is readily available, and much of it has been published in either professional journals or popular books.

The evidence I read and which I gathered myself suggested that clergy were more sanguine about their performance than their parishioners. Barely a minister to whom I spoke could refrain from telling me that he, or she, did "a good funeral". Their confidence was based upon the thanks they received from mourners immediately after the service.

I regard much post-funeral thankfulness as relief that "it" was not as ghastly as it might have been.
Yours faithfully,
PAUL P. J. SHEPPY
Secretary, The Joint Liturgical Group of Great Britain
Barnoldswick, Lancashire
2 February

From The Rev Struan H. Dunn
Sir: All this fuss about the conduct of funerals needs to be put in perspective.

I had to take a funeral for an ex-patriate in Spain and it took nearly a whole day to complete the task. When we arrived at the cemetery overlooking the port of Barcelona, the grave had not been dug. Any sense of dignified decorum was broken when the long line of mourners was pushed aside by four men pushing a wheelbarrow, making haste to reach the designated spot. Armed with pickaxes, swords and spades, they proceeded to excavate the old family grave. Earth, bones and debris went flying, while the chief mourner sat in silent resignation on a nearby grave, the coffin meanwhile parked unceremoniously against a wall.

Some stiff-upper-lip protests to the *Jefe* (superintendent) were met with the response "*Mañana*" – come back tomorrow! A wise ex-patriate, however, passed 300 pesetas under the table and the commital was re-scheduled for 2.30pm that same afternoon.

This gave everyone plenty of time to sample excellent Spanish cuisine in the city's nearby restaurants. We returned to the graveside, freshly dug, after the briefest of siestas and everything was brought to a satisfactory conclusion.
Yours faithfully,
STRUAN H. DUNN
Rural Dean of Gillingham
Wigmore, Kent
2 February

From Mr Harold Brend
Sir: I agree with your leader comments on the bleakness and inappropriateness of the conventional funeral service for many people, and when my wife died after a long illness I decided that the best way to avoid what would have been for me (and her) a meaningless event was to conduct the ceremony myself. With the help of the crematorium staff and the undertaker, this was not difficult.

I provided the undertaker with two pre-recorded pieces of music that my wife had loved, and asked a close family friend to give a short address.

I welcomed the mourners, explaining the nature of the ceremony, so as not to offend those who were expecting a religious service, and asked them all to enjoy the music in happy memory of my wife.

The whole procedure was very warm and dignified, although the most difficult part for me emotionally was arranging things beforehand while my wife was still alive; but I also felt that, after years of caring, it was the last service I could perform for her.
Yours faithfully,
HAROLD BREND
Hitchin,
Hertfordshire
5 February

Urgent need for electoral reform

From Sir Geoffrey Chandler
Sir: Never has the need for a new electoral system been more vividly portrayed than in the shoddy debasement of argument for party advantage that we are seeing on issues fundamental to the happiness of people in this country.

Not only is reason thrown out of the window, but the interests of the young, the sick and the victims of crime are sacrificed to short-term political advantage as the dreary blast and counter-blast of premature electoral battle contend for news time or column inches. At best the winner will form a government with a minority of the popular vote, spurning or caricaturing any move to find consensus.

And yet the issues at stake – health, education, crime – are immensely complex. There are no ready answers to the conundrums they pose in a world of different expectations and possibilities today. The relative failure of the British economy means that we have little margin for error and cannot afford the self-indulgence of politicians who prefer the false certainties of dogma to reasoned analysis and debate.

This is simply a cry of outrage, which must be shared by countless numbers. And, heaven help us, we may have to endure it for months yet.
Yours faithfully,
GEOFFREY CHANDLER
London, SE10
30 January

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Orphaned by technology

From Ms Josephine Quintavalle
Sir: We welcome Polly Toynbee's comments regarding unclaimed frozen embryos ("Who'll hear an unwanted foetus?", 2 February), as we are trying to encourage debate at all levels. While the tone of her article was certainly agitated, perhaps a little more emotional focus on the fact that these embryos have been abandoned by their parents might have been expected. To quote Oscar Wilde: "To lose both [parents] looks like carelessness".

It is this carelessness that Core (Comment on Reproductive Ethics) would like to address. There are very serious scientific, legal and moral questions that need to be asked about embryo freezing. Technology rushes ahead but the thinking has yet to be done. All we are asking for at this stage is to hold an extended and open debate with access to as much research and opinion as possible.

The "orphaning" to date of 3,000 frozen embryos is fruit of the present system. We should not rush into any further mistakes.
Yours sincerely,
JOSEPHINE QUINTAVILLE
Co-Founder
Comment on Reproductive Ethics
London, SW3
2 February

A fearless mouse

From Mrs Geraldine Burke
Sir: Whatever gave Marianne Macdonald the impression that Jane Eyre was a "mousy governess" ("Brontës next to scale heights of television", 5 February)?

In the words of Q. D. Leavis, she was "fearless, unashamed of passionate feeling, and while needing to serve, still determined to have her rights acknowledged". Hardly the characteristics of a mousy woman.
Yours sincerely,
GERALDINE BURKE
Marsh Baldon,
Oxfordshire
5 February

Healthy salaries at the NHS

From Ms June Poston and Mr Graeme Poston
Sir: Roy Lilley (Another View: "Nursing the sick – and grudges", 2 February), invites many questions and much argument. The most fundamental question has to be, if, as Mr Lilley reports, the hospital boss's salary is a mere £65,000 in the NHS and his or her salary would be more like £120,000 in the private sector, why, then, is he or she not working in the private sector?
Yours faithfully,
JUNE POSTON
Clinical Nurse
GRAEME POSTON
Consultant Surgical Oncologist
Liverpool
3 February

From Dr Peter Rohde
Sir: Roy Lilley's article confirms what I have always suspected – that some NHS managers believe that it is *they* who deliver the service to patients, not the clinical staff.
Yours faithfully,
PETER ROHDE
London, W1
3 February

Yorkshire brass

From Mr John Tindale
Sir: Simon Calder (Weekend: "Captain Cook: from Whitby to Hawaii", 3 February) repeats the fallacy that Captain Cook "former house" was "dismantled stone by stone" and taken to Melbourne in Australia.

Even in 1934 there were those who would sell you Buckingham Palace – this cottage was the home of Cook's father, who built it himself after Cook had long left home. Cook might have visited it, but that's about all. The Melbourne authorities fell for a good Yorkshire bit of salesmanship.
Yours truly,
JOHN TINDALE
Whitby,
North Yorkshire
25 January

Nobel youngsters

From Mr Liam Dunne
Sir: Geoffrey Brogan (letter, 3 February) is incorrect. The youngest person ever to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature was Rudyard Kipling. He received it in 1907, aged 42.
Yours sincerely,
LIAM DUNNE
London, SW18

Taxing our children

From The Rev Dr A. E. Harvey
Sir: In your leading article "Why graduates should pay more" (2 February), you agree with what appears to be the view of both Government and Opposition that higher education must henceforth be financed with the help of some form of student loans or graduate tax. This is allegedly made necessary by the greatly increased number of those wishing to continue their education after they leave school and is justified on the grounds that since a degree or diploma is likely to lead to a better-paid job, it is only fair that the beneficiary should pay back some of the cost of acquiring this advantage.

The next generation will have to carry burdens greater than any before them: unsolved environmental and geopolitical problems created by our profligate use of the earth's resources and provision for an unprecedently large population of the elderly. In addition to all this, we are now asking them to pay back the cost of higher education.

In the past, it has been taken for granted that parents should do their best to provide for their children a life at least as good as they have had themselves. Now, for perhaps the first time in recorded history, this covenant has been broken. We have consented to place our own comfort (represented by a low level of taxation) above the needs of our children.

If parents were to offer their children the best available education only on condition of being repaid later on, we would hardly approve. Is not the whole concept of student loans to save the taxpayer money equally immoral?
Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY HARVEY
Sub-Dean
Westminster Abbey
London, SW1
3 February

Market for MPs

From Lord Broadbridge
Sir: We in the Lords have been viewing with some amusement the furore over MPs' salary levels. What is only infrequently mentioned is that their allowances in many cases treble or more their nominal salary.

Is is said that an MP recently advertised for a secretary. Facing his preferred candidate he asked, "And what salary would you be wanting?".

"Fifty pounds per week," she replied.

"Oh, I'll pay you that with pleasure."

"Oh, no," she said. "It'll be £200 per week with pleasure."
Yours faithfully,
BROADBRIDGE
House of Lords
London, SW1
27 February

From Mr Simon Herbertson
Sir: Henceforth, at every general election, on the ballot paper beside the candidates' name and political party, put the annual salary each individual prospective MP is prepared to work for in Parliament, up to a maximum of, say, £50,000, the bill to be paid out of the local council tax.

We're all supposed to scrabble around in an undignified manner undercutting each other for work – why can't *they* join in the fun, too?
Yours faithfully,
SIMON HERBERTSON
Minstead,
Hampshire
4 February

Guaranteed to be a total fraud

MILES KINGTON

There is a case going on in the High Court at the moment that will be of interest to anyone who has ever tried to get their money back and failed. Charles Goodbred, the man who has pioneered the modern guarantee in Britain, is up on a charge of conspiring to defraud a customer of rightful compensation. Here is part of yesterday's proceedings, when Goodbred took the stand to explain exactly how guarantees work.

Counsel: Your name is Charles Goodbred?

Goodbred: That is the name under which I was registered.

Counsel: By your parents?

Goodbred: By two people who claimed to be my parents.

Counsel: But they were your parents, were they not?

Goodbred: Nobody else ever came forward to claim me.

Judge: Excuse me for interjecting, Mr Goodbred, but is this not an over-cautious attitude to your parentage? Should we not take it on trust that the two people who tell us they are our father and mother probably *are* our father and mother?

Goodbred: My work has taught me not to take anyone on trust, m'lord, least of all myself.

Judge: I see. Carry on.

Counsel: Now, Mr Goodbred, you are, I believe, the originator of the so-called "lifetime guarantee".

Goodbred: That is so.

Counsel: Could you explain to the court how this works?

Goodbred: Certainly. What we do for certain classes of object, such as videotapes, is give them a lifetime guarantee. When the object wears out, as it is bound to, the purchaser feels aggrieved and wants his money back.

Counsel: Do you then recompense him?

Goodbred: No. We point out that the video has worn out because it has come to the end of its lifetime. A lifetime guarantee is only valid until the end of the lifetime. After that, it is worthless. "Lifetime" does not mean "eternity". Almost the opposite, in fact.

Counsel: So the guarantee is only valid while the videotape still works?

Goodbred: Yes.

Counsel: And as soon as it expires, the guarantee expires also?

Goodbred: Yes.

Counsel: Surely the guarantee is therefore worthless?

Goodbred: Not to those who issue it.

Judge: So how do you know that I am the judge, Mr Goodbred?

Goodbred: I am sorry, m'lord?

Judge: You said earlier that you took nobody on trust, even your parents. How do you know I am the judge?

Goodbred: I don't. I only have your word for it. I am working on the assumption that nobody voluntarily would want to wear those ridiculous clothes, do that ridiculous job and talk in that ridiculous kind of language.

Judge: To which kind of language do you refer, pray?

Goodbred: To the kind of language in which people say: "To which kind of language do you refer, pray?"

Judge: Fair enough. Carry on.

Counsel: Could you give us an idea of some of the other guarantees you have invented?

Goodbred: Certainly. I devised the "Cleaned While You Wait" guarantee. People assumed that this meant things would be cleaned quickly. Not at all. People can wait for hours, days, even weeks. I devised the "Same day cleaning" guarantee ...

Counsel: But surely that cannot be used deceptively! That means what it says – that goods will be cleaned the same day they are handed in?

Goodbred: Not at all. It can mean that they are cleaned the same day they are returned. Very often we actually give a "Some day cleaning" guarantee, and people misread it as "Same day cleaning".

Counsel: Any other examples of this iniquitous approach to language?

Goodbred: Certainly. I was the first to issue a "24-hour service" promise. People always thought that meant 24 hours from when the service was requested or when the goods were handed in. Not so. I was also the first to point out that "Round the clock service" was not the same as being always open.

Counsel: But surely being open round the clock means being open all the time?

Goodbred: I think not. How many hours are there on the clock?

Counsel: Twelve.

Goodbred: So round-the-clock service guarantees being open a maximum of 12 hours, not 24.

Judge: I think he's got you there, Jim!

The case continues.

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Victims of electricity fever must now pay price

COMMENT

'One consequence already being felt is deeper cost-cutting programmes than anyone had previously thought desirable as the buyers desperately try to make their investments produce a respectable return'

There will no doubt be more electricity bids to keep the City in bid fees before the season is out. But already there is a suspicion that some of those to have struck when electricity was the height of fashion might have overpaid. Certainly some very full prices were coughed up in the scramble for regional electricity companies and if regret is not quite the word for it yet, there are some worried looking purchasers wandering around this industry right now.

One of the consequences, already being felt at the coal face, is much deeper cost cutting programmes than anyone had previously thought desirable or even possible as the buyers desperately try to make their investments produce a respectable return. In some companies, up to 20 per cent of the workforce is to be shed over the next year and there could be further cuts the year after.

For the time being, the 12 regional electricity companies operate in a comparitively benevolent regulatory environment. This cannot and will not persist if previous privatisations are anything to go by. The available pay back time may be more limited than any of the bidders appreciated in the heat of the scrummage. That has added extra urgency to the cost cutting, which in turn shows growing signs of running into serious union resistence.

Add to that the fact that the industry will soon be going through a period of very substantial structural change, with the onset of competition and vertical integration, and the concern seems wholly justified.

Bizarre battle over Chile Growth Fund

The *GT Chile Growth Fund* sounds more like something out of a Tex Mex restaurant than the normally sedate world occupied by investment trusts. But investment trust it is. It is also the territory on which a bizarre little City takeover battle is being fought. The bid is unusual because it is taking place outside Takeover Panel controls, or any other regulatory authority for that matter. This in turn is because the company, though listed on the London stock exchange and managed out of London, is registered in the Cayman Islands.

For the past year or more the *GT* Chile Growth Fund has been under siege by a group of arbitrageurs called Regent Kingpin Acquisitions, an outfit that specialises in trying to narrow the gap between assets and share price in funds such as GT Chile Growth. Unbelievably, RKA beats the Chile Growth Fund for the number of domiciles it answers to (or more truthfully, doesn't answer to). Managed out of London, it is also registered in the Cayman Islands and is ultimately controlled, via Hong Kong, by a Canadian holding company.

According to GT Chile's financial advisers, the arbs have ignored getting on for every rule in the book in their quest for control of the fund's $385m of assets. Included in the list of alleged misdemeanours is misleading shareholders, not obeying the usual takeover timetable rules, and perhaps worst of all, offering favourable terms to some shareholders over others.

Regent denies it all, of course, but whether by fair means or fowl, the arbs were last night claiming control over 62 per cent of GT Chile's shares and demanding the keys to the city. Not likely, says *GT Management*, which runs the fund. Even if they have 60 per cent, which GT Chile disputes, they have got there by disreputable means.

But while there are important issues of principle involved here, it is hard to feel too sorry for *GT Chile* or its shareholders. There is only one reason why companies set up shop in the Cayman Islands and only one reason investors are attracted to them; inadequate investor protection is part of the price paid for the assumed tax advantages. Furthermore, it is not at all clear that the arbs are indeed the force for evil they are painted. Since they arrived on the scene the discount has narrowed from 20 to 7 per cent. You won't find many shareholders complaining about that.

Heseltine injects a dose of reality

The greater the truth, the greater the libel. Michael Heseltine was given a sharp reminder of this old truism over the weekend when he prompted a storm of protest by remarking that late payment of bills was the mark of a good businessman.

It may not be to everyone's liking, but it is a fact that very small businesses struggling to survive are likely to juggle their debts and avoid paying creditors as long as possible. This must have been especially true in the property, hotel and publishing jungles where Mr Heseltine cut his teeth in the 'fifties.

There are a number of other celebrated modern businessmen, such as Richard Branson, whose biographies demonstrate the pressure to cut corners to stay afloat in their early days. The truth of the matter is that most businesses attempt, with varying degrees of success, to use their suppliers as a source of free loans. When they go bust there is a chain reaction of defaults. Small firm owner managers are also notorious for running slapdash and ineffective credit control systems, often without clear payment terms.

According to DTI figures, 40 per cent of small firms have no standard conditions of trade, so even their creditors are likely to be unclear about when the cheques are due and what happens if they are not paid. If the practice of late payment was confined to small firms, there might be more tolerance of it, but large companies are often the worst offenders, able to extort very substantial free loans from their smaller suppliers by the simple expedient of failing to send cheques on time. Worse still, it has become clear over the last few years that government departments are as bad as anyone. Improvement is proceeding at no more than a snail's pace.

Mr Heseltine cannot be criticised for injecting a dose of reality into the debate, but the government may find that legislation is both popular and less impractical than ministers and the CBI now claim.

Arthur Daley approach to privatisation

In the circumstances, it was all going remarkably smoothly. And then suddenly, disaster. The political triumph of the sale of the first three rail franchises has been reduced to ashes by the weekend's fraud allegations.

The trouble is that Sir George Young has been forced by election pressures to behave like Arthur Daley, flogging off everything in his lock-up under the railway arches at rock bottom prices, because he knows the police are on the way, in the form of a *Labour* government.

More haste, less speed. Roger Salmon, the franchise director, has been told to have the other 22 train operating companies ready for sale by October. The bandwagon is now moving so fast it will be hard to keep it on the rails.

ML Laboratories directors net £6m in options bonanza

Follow my leader: Kevin Leech, founder of ML Laboratories, who recently cashed in shares worth £55m

...NUS GRIMOND

...ectors in ML Laboratories, the fledgling pharmaceutical company, have made a ...m gain on the sale of options less than two weeks after ...in Leech, chairman and founder, cashed in shares worth ...m it emerged yesterday.

...he sales bring to at least ...m the total withdrawn by directors of biotechnology groups ...e their shares soared in the ...e of British Biotech's announcement in Novemer of ...mising results for its ...imastat anti-cancer drug.

...tuart Sim, ML's deputy chief ...utive, netted £4.04m from ...exercise of options at 41p ...; their immediate sale at ... Professor Donald Davies, ...her director, picked up ...£m from the exercise of ...000 options at 0.2p and the disposal of 500,000 of the resulting shares at 445p. Last month, Mr Leech garnered £55m from a share placing to coincide with a placing by the company to raise £25m at 400p.

The ML option bonanza is the biggest yet in a recent spate which has netted at least £13m for the directors of loss-making biotechnology groups. Two executives of British Biotech made £3.2m in December, when four directors Celltech also netted £3.5m.

ML's shares have been given an additional spur by the revelation at the end of last month that a clinical study of a new Aids treatment conducted on four patients with late stages of the disease was progressing well.

From a price of 356p in November, the shares soared to a peak of 472p after January's news, although they slid 18p to 436p yesterday, apparently on disappointment that the group had yet to tie up a marketing deal for its anti-asthma inhaler.

At a briefing for City analysts yesterday, the company defended both the decision to cash in options and the Aids study. Mr Sim pointed to the 46-fold increase in the company's share price since it originally floated on the third market in 1987. "Let's not ask why it happens, lets just accept that it has happened. There are a lot of private shareholders and institutions who will be very pleased with that."

Professor Davies admitted that the Aids study, after which one of the patients died, was "far too small too small to discuss any efficacy of the treatment." But he said the treatment had been "well tolerated" in the patients, two of whom remain well seven months later. So-called "viral load" tests in the laboratory, involving the measurement of the amount of the virus remaining in the blood, compared well with AZT, the main anti-Aids drug manufactured by Glaxo Wellcome.

The ML treatment involves dissolving dextrin sulphate in the company's patented Icodial solution, developed as a method of kidney dialysis. Professor Davies said they had enough evidence to go forward to the next stage, a study involving 20 to 30 late-stage patients.

There was good news yesterday for Bespak, the aerosol manufacturer that has had to take a £18.6m write-down after a royalty deal with ML for its inhaler failed to deliver income. ML said a new arrangement, near conclusion, will mitigate some of the onerous royalties payable by Bespak.

Mercury furious at BT ruling

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

Mercury Communications yesterday said it was appalled by a ruling by Don Cruickshank, the telecoms regulator, that would make competitors pay for part of the cost of BT's redundancy schemes.

Mercury was commenting on Mr Cruickshank's announcement of the amount other operators will have to pay BT as interconnection charges to use its network.

A Mercury spokesman said the company had been assured two months ago that other operators would not be required to contribute to BT's redundancy costs. "We don't know what changed his mind," said the company.

Peter Howell-Davies, chief executive of Mercury, said BT would also be allowed under the new ruling to claw back money it has spent maintaining empty accommodation and on running the office of the chairman, Sir Iain Vallance.

Mr Howell-Davies said: "I am appalled that Oftel [the regulator] should feel BT deserves special treatment as competition is a fact of life for all operators. Many have used redundancy to improve their efficiency and reduce costs in the face of that competition."

The costs of those cuts were normally borne by a company and its shareholders and not by customers and competitors, he added. Mr Howell-Davies complained that BT's employee relations director had said in 1992 that the cost of the company's "Release" redundancy plan had been pitched higher than necessary, to persuade more people to leave BT.

Sharp rise in costs prompts downgrading of BA profits

...SSELL HOTTEN

...alysts downgraded British ...ways full-year profits after it ...orted rising costs and disappointing passenger figures ...the third quarter.

...A, linked in this weekend's ...ian press as a possible in...tor in Alitalia, made profits ...104m in the three months ...l December. Although this was up from the £80m a year earlier, the figure was still at the lower range of expectations.

The City had been worried about BA's costs, up 4.5 per cent half-way, and were looking for signs of a reduction. Instead, costs accelerated 9.2 per cent in the three months.

In Italy, speculation was mounting that BA may take a stake in Alitalia, the loss-making state airline that is being restructured.

Newspapers reported Silvano Barberini, general secretary of the Fit-Cisl, an aviation union, as saying: "The negotiations [by Alitalia] with British Airways and other private Italian airlines exist and continue. We have an obligation [to our members] to make them known." BA declined to comment.

BA passenger revenues were disappointing, with only a 5 per cent rise on the previous year. Andrew Chambers, of Strauss Turnbull, said the revenues were "not as good as recent months". Crédit Lyonnais Laing cut its full-year profit forecast by about £15m to £565m, while Strauss Turnbull trimmed £10m off its figure to £580m. BA shares fell 19p to 502p.

A BA spokesman said the higher costs were because the company had invested heavily, including upgrading facilities with the new flying beds and cradle seats for premium customers.

Passenger revenues were affected by bad weather which caused flight cancellations, and the impact of the US government's shut-down. BA also said French nuclear testing in the Pacific had hit traffic from Japan to Europe.

Robert Ayling, chief executive, said the airline, which had cut £900m off its cost base in the past five years, would continue to attack costs. "We will be tackling costs vigorously. I do not believe any airline our size can sustain business with the sort of cost bases they currently have over the very long term."

A total of 24.8 million passengers flew on BA's scheduled services in the nine months to December, up 5 per cent on a year ago. In the third quarter to December, 7.5 million passengers were carried, up 3.9 per cent. With average passengers flying further, growth in revenue passenger kilometres was up 8.7 per cent in the third quarter and 9.6 per cent in the nine months.

Edwards asks National Power for £5m support

...VID HELLIER

...e future of Coal Investments, ...mining group headed by the ...ner British Coal director ...lcolm Edwards, was looking ...easingly uncertain last night.

...With interest from traditional City backers thin on the ...und for a £20m rights issue, ...Edwards has been forced to ...roach National Power, the ...erator and Coal's largest customer. He is believed to have ...ed National Power whether ...could consider injecting up ...5m into the company as part ...a rescue plan.

...ources close to Coal Investments described this approach last night as "very nearly ...st throw of the dice."

...National Power was not saying yesterday what its response ...Mr Edwards would be. "We ...e been approached by Coal ...estments and we are listening to what they have to say." ...pokesman said yesterday.

...analysts doubt whether National Power will be seduced ...taking a significant investment in the embattled mining ...company, even though they ...nt out that it would be in the ...erator's interest for Mr Edwards' company to survive. Coal ...estments provides competition in the supply of coal against ...hard Budge's RJB Mining ...oup.

...Bankers and potential investors are disappointed that, after weeks of trying, Coal Investments has still not appointed a new chief executive to work alongside Mr Edwards. The company plans to appoint a chief executive and keep Mr Edwards on, perhaps in a strong marketing role.

Potential investors are believed to have been telling the company for some weeks that they will not entertain backing a rights issue if Mr Edwards retains his current position at the helm of the group without the support of a new chief executive.

In particular they are alarmed by the series of disappointing financial statements the company has been forced into making in the past few months. And the company is yet to produce its interim figures for the half-year to 30 September.

The company's debts are reportedly increasing daily and are said to be approaching the £30m level.

The banks, which are led by National Westminster, UBS and Banque Indosuez, have also indicated that they will not significantly increase the company's banking facility unless investors back a rights issue and the company recruits a new chief executive.

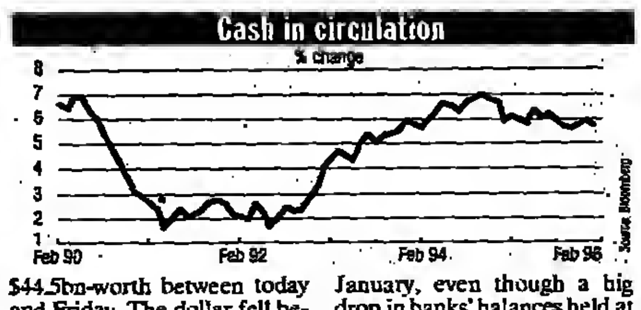
The banks were in a key meeting yesterday afternoon.

Coal Investments was founded when Mr Edwards bought a number of redundant mines from British Coal.

Economy: Prospects of fresh rate cut tomorrow recede as outlook brightens

Markets fall on growth hopes

DIANE COYLE
Economics Correspondent



Concerns that the economic outlook might not be as gloomy as feared hit interest rate hopes and sent financial markets lower yesterday. Gilts and shares in London ended lower, following the lead set by the US and Germany.

Remarks by Howard Davies, Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, that growth as high as 3 per cent this year was "well within the realms of possibility" followed figures showing the narrow money supply was slightly more buoyant than expected last month.

City analysts do not expect the Chancellor to reduce base rates after his meeting with the Governor of the Bank of England tomorrow after two moves in the past two months, but are still betting on one more quarter point reduction from the current level of 6.25 per cent before midsummer.

Gilts ended more than a point lower in heavy trading, while the FT-SE 100 index closed down nearly 35 points at 3746.6.

A weak performance by German government bonds yesterday also affected gilts. The bund market fell after figures showing an increase in German output for the second month running in December.

US Treasuries echoed the weakness in European markets, overshadowed by the prospect of record sales of bonds due this week. The Treasury is scheduled to auction $44.5bn-worth between today and Friday. The dollar fell below Yen105 due to uncertainty about Japanese buyers' interest in the auction. It was down more than a pfennig at DM1.4625.

Cash in circulation in the UK rose more than expected in January, even though a big drop in banks' balances held at the Bank of England meant the overall growth of the narrow money measure, M0, dipped.

Narrow money fell 0.2 per cent during the month due to this £128m decline in bankers' balances, following a 0.9 per cent jump in December. M0's annual growth fell to 5.3 per cent from 5.7 per cent.

There was a 0.3 per cent rise in notes and coin in circulation last month, taking its year-on-year growth to 5.7 per cent – similar to its rate of growth in the previous six months.

The Bank of England warned that adjustment for seasonal variation was difficult over Christmas and New Year. Robert Barrie, UK economist at BZW, said: "Taking the two months together, the figures point to steady growth."

An article on interpreting the money supply due in the Bank of England's *Quarterly Bulletin* next week is expected to show that narrow money is a good forward indicator of the economy's performance.

Separate figures from department store and supermarket group John Lewis provided additional evidence that retail sales were not unduly weak last month. It reported that sales were running about 10 per cent higher than a year earlier.

However, new housing starts remained weak in December, and were 15 per cent lower in 1995 than the previous year.

Germany's industrial output rose 0.6 per cent in December, following a 0.9 per cent rise the previous month, a better performance than expected. Economist Robert Prior-Wandesforde at James Capel said: "There is some tentative hope that the worst of the slowdown in Germany may be behind us."

Reports of a split are 'healthy part of analysis'

It is no surprise that the Chancellor and Governor of the Bank of England sometimes disagree at their monthly monetary meetings, a Bank of England director said yesterday, **writes Diane Coyle.**

Referring to recent reports of a split between the two men at their meeting last month, Ian Plenderleith, an executive director of the Bank, said that although these differences of view were written up in "extreme confrontational terms" they were a healthy part of the analysis and judgement.

"There is an urge to identify who 'won' and who 'lost' and an intense interest in keeping a sort of scorecard of the effect decisions have, in order to decide, with the benefit of hindsight, who was 'right' and who was 'wrong'," Mr Plenderleith said.

He argued that differences of view should be freely aired and debated. It was thanks to Britain's open monetary arrangements that "We have successfully surmounted just the kind of inflationary shock that in the past tended to knock us off course," Mr Plenderleith said.

In January Mr Clarke announced the second cut in base rates in five weeks. City analysts do not expect him to push his luck by reducing base rates again after tomorrow's meeting.

IN BRIEF

Talks may yet save ailing Fokker

Fokker's chances of survival improved last night after several companies, including British Aerospace and Bombardier, said they were talking to the ailing Dutch aircraft maker, **writes Russell Hotten.** Bombardier, the Canadian company that owns Shorts Brothers in Belfast, said it was "just exploring" the situation with Fokker. BAe's interest is via the AIR regional jet partnership it formed with France's Aerospatiale and Italy's Alenia.

AIR has always said it wanted to broaden the alliance, though a BAe spokesman said its contact with Fokker could not really be described as negotiations. "We are just keep up with the situation," he said. "It has been done through AIR. It is entirely exploratory." South Korea's Samsung also said it was talking to Fokker, and the Taiwanese government is believed to be interested in all or part of the company.

Clerical Medical 'reviewing options'

Clerical Medical, the 11th-largest life company in the UK, said yesterday it was reviewing its strategic options, but refused to comment on reports that it has put itself up for sale. Schroders, the merchant bank appointed by Clerical to contact potential buyers, also refused to comment on the reports. Analysts put a price of about £1bn on the mutual life insurer, which has £13bn of funds under management.

Scottish Widows to axe 700

Scottish Widows, the insurance giant, is cutting 700 jobs. The cuts are expected to take effect over the next year as part of a radical streamlining and centralisation operation. Between 500 and 600 jobs will go at the firm's head office in Edinburgh, where it employs 2,200. The company said it hoped to achieve these reductions by retirement, routine departures and a scheme for voluntary redundancy.

New boss lifts Hilton shares in US

Hilton Hotels Corporation's shares jumped more than 10 per cent to $81.50 in early dealings on Wall Street as investors reacted favourably to the company's move to hire financial wizard Stephen Bollenbach as its president and chief executive officer from Walt Disney. Mr Bollenbach only joined Disney last April and was the architect of the company's merger with Capital Cities/ABC Inc. He replaces Barron Hilton as chief executive of Hilton.

Oriel Group confirms approach

Oriel Group, insurance brokers, has received an approach from a third party which may or may not lead to an offer being made for the whole of the company, it said yesterday. The board said the talks were "exploratory and tentative".

business

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN
Edited by TOM STEVENSON

Downsized pooches dog Dalgety

When Dalgety paid £440m for the European petfood business of Quaker Petfoods a year ago, the hope was that the deal would help transform the business from a dull dog of a company into a more lively animal.

Few quibbled with the strategy. The idea was to move from being a hit-part player in the cut-throat food sector to a powerful force in one market – petfood, with two other businesses in agribusiness and food ingredients.

The Golden Wonder snacks and Homepride sauces were sold for £280m to help raise funds for the deal with the remainder coming from a rights issue.

If there were doubts about the logic they centred on the price Dalgety paid. At this level, it needed everything to go right to achieve the kind of returns it was promising. Yesterday's results showed that the plan has gone badly awry.

The 14 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £69.4m for the six months to December flatters the company as it includes a net £22m from the various disposals and acquisitions.

At the operating level profits were down from £61m to £47m with the worst problems centred in petfood where trading profits fell by £5m. This was partly due to a fall in sales at the end of the year though the excuses for the decline were fairly colourful. According to Dalgety chief executive Richard Clothier, Britain's pet owners have been downsizing their dogs, preferring to buy smaller pooches which eat less. On the cat front, Britain's fussy moggies have shifted their favours towards cans with chunky meat bits while Dalgety was moving towards pâté style offerings. What he did not say was that Dalgety had replaced meat chunks with vegetable substitutes in its Arthur's brand to save costs but seen the move backfire.

The company is pushing ahead with the rationalisation and it will achieve its £40m of cost savings by next year instead of 1998 as originally forecast.

Profits at agribusiness were up by 25 per cent to £21m though this was largely due to the acquisition of the Pig Improvement Company. Margins have been badly affected by rising raw material costs, particularly in wheat and soya.

In food ingredients, profits were down 17 per cent at £15m with rising raw material costs again a key factor.

Dalgety shareholders have watched the shares drift down from 484p in August to 413p, a further 2p easier yesterday. The outlook does not look encouraging. BZW has cut its forecast from £132m to £122m for the full year which puts the shares on a forward rating of 15. With a recovery still dependent on everything going Dalgety's way,

Property goes derivative

The latest attempt by a group of investing institutions to create a viable property derivatives market as an alternative to investing directly in property underlines the air of crisis surrounding the industry. Last year's 15 per cent underperformance of the market by property shares followed a 14 per cent lag in 1994 and it is impossible to find a sector analyst who sees an end to the slump.

It is becoming a familiar story, but property companies once again had to struggle with flat rental values and rising yields. The combination of those meant property values slipped 5 per cent during the year.

The industry's problems are legion, but one of the newer and most worrying concerns is the very status of property as an institutional investment. The asset class sank to only 5 per cent of pension fund assets by the end of the year, compared with 14.5 per cent in 1981. At that time insurance companies had been even more heavily skewed towards property, with 21 per cent of their assets in bricks and mortar.

The worries about the speed with which institutions can buy and sell property when pension funds are being encouraged to invest in ever more liquid assets is one of the driving forces behind attempts to develop a securitised version of the sector. Whether it can succeed after many previously stalled attempts remains to be seen.

With a drip-feed of disinvestment from the sector, attention focuses on the prospects for rental growth and the movement in the yields surveyors use to calculate capital values. This is a mixed bag, with falling bond yields around the world making current property yields look generous, but rents are still under the cosh from slow-growing employment and the number of properties offering no growth because they are currently being rented at levels higher than the going rate.

Flat rents cause two problems for property companies. They put the lid on asset values, which is one of the key determinants of share price – depending on the mood of the market, property shares trade at either a premium or discount to this benchmark. But perhaps more importantly they restrict the flow of revenue from which a company can pay dividends. To create a healthier cash flow companies are forced to rely less on contractually guaranteed rents and more on trading profits.

In these difficult circumstances, selectivity is the key. The only property companies to outperform this year will be niche players such as Trocadero and Capital Shopping Centres and good asset sweaters like Asda, Burford and Chelsfield. Forget the majors which, with the possible exception of British Land, really only track the market as a whole.

Ferguson feels the squeeze

Ferguson International is yet another name to add to the victims of the high street downturn. The labels group warned of a disappointing start to the second half when it announced the sale of its coathangers business in October. Yesterday it was forced to admit that trading had been even worse than expected.

Normalised profits will dip from last year's £12.8m to £11.5m in the 12 months to February, the company forecast, before a net £1.5m exceptional charge, mostly relating to the hanger division's withdrawal from German production.

Ferguson has been squeezed between the reluctance of consumers to spend on the garments and food for which it provides labels and hangers, and the soaring cost of raw materials. The worst pain has been on the garment side, as margin pressure from retailers like Marks & Spencer feeds down the production chain. There have been similar problems in food, where the big supermarkets are bearing down on suppliers. That has prevented Ferguson passing on cost increases of between 6 and 50 per cent over the past year.

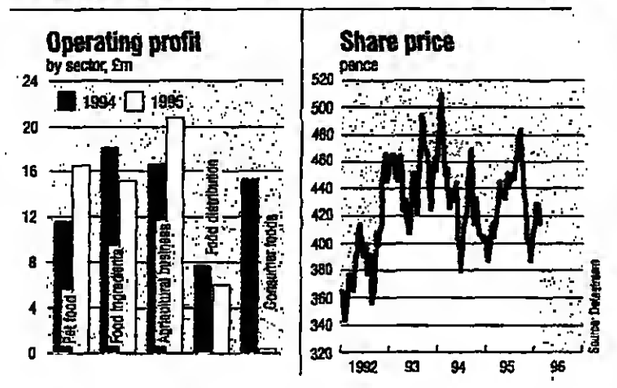
The group has taken out 80 jobs since October and further cost-cutting measures are in the pipeline. In a carbon copy of the strategy of rival Jarvis Porter, it plans to move into more profitable areas like toiletries, while strengthening the existing US computer-labelling business.

If Ferguson realises net asset value of £20m on the disposal of the hangers operation, gearing should tumble to around 20 per cent. The shares, down 21p to 196p, stand on a forward multiple of 10. Jarvis Porter looks more exciting.

Dalgety: at a glance

Market value: £1.12bn, share price 413p

Trading record	1993	1994	1995	1994 (Half year)	1995 (Half year)
Turnover (£bn)	4.47	4.96	4.65	2.56	2.18
Pre-tax profits (£m)	112	120	127	60.9	69.4
Earnings per share (pence)	34.2	35.1	33.2	16.9	17.7
Dividends per share (pence)	19.6	20.3	22.0	8.5	8.5



John Willcock CITY DIARY

A bridge too far for Allied Domecq's shareholders

Allied Domecq shareholders who attend today's annual meeting may care to ask the board about one asset which seems anything but liquid and somewhat unproductive. It is a little known fact that the drinks giant owns the Shepton Mallet railway viaduct in Somerset, an imposing Victorian structure that fell victim to the Beeching cots of the early 1960s.

The viaduct backs on to the garden behind the old head office of Hiram Walker, formerly the spirits division of Allied Domecq. The garden and the head office itself have long since been sold off, but the group could never find a buyer for the viaduct, a listed structure.

The viaduct is currently undergoing repairs to stop it falling down. English Heritage is contributing 40 per cent of the estimated £350,000 bill, and Allied Domecq the rest. No doubt shareholders will be congratulating the board on this public spirited gesture.

Officials within British Rail knew last Tuesday of the alleged ticket frauds on the London to Southend line, yet the Transport Secretary, Sir George Young, was only told of the problem on Thursday afternoon. The fact that the story broke so late ruined the privatisation handover, and according to sources Sir George is "hopping mad".

A spokesman for BR said yesterday: "Exactly how long this has been under investigation is unclear." He said it appeared that on Wednesday the Rail Settlement Plan, which administers the division of fare receipts, passed on the allegations to the Association of Train Operating Companies. On Thursday the association passed on the news to the group managing director of the British Rail Board (South and East), John Nelson.

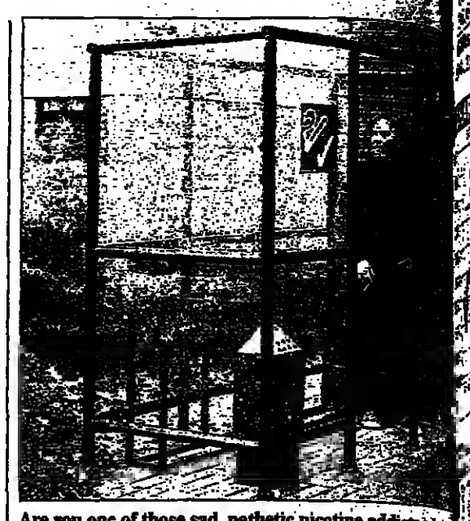
Mr Nelson duly notified the Department of Transport, and hence Sir George Young. Perhaps the news was delayed by leaves on the track.

Last week the Diary drew the attention of investment bankers to Eddie George's imminent skiing holiday, and the spooky fact that almost exactly a year ago the Bank of England Governor's last ski trip was cut short by the collapse of Barings.

This prompted a Bank watcher yesterday to recount a similar incident concerning his predecessor, Sir Robin Leigh-Pemberton, now Lord Kingsdown. In October 1987 he had just reached the airport before flying off to a business jaunt around China when he got news of a huge stock market sell-off. This turned into Monday, but too late for Robin, who flew off to China regardless.

As the days passed and mood of panic heightened Robin could not be reached as he travelled deeper into China. When the recluse got through he was told it would take at least a week to get out of such a remote and back to the UK.

Step forward the "Flying Biscuit", the private jet lent by Sir Hector Laing, the chairman of United Biscuits and a member of the Court of the Bank of England. The Biscuit, which duly whisked the Governor home, has sadly since been withdrawn. Apparently it cost a packet.



Are you one of those sad, pathetic nicotine addicts who couldn't keep that new year resolution to kick the weed? Have you been ejected from your office by a smoking ban, and do you huddle with fellow addicts around the bin puffing away come rain or shine? Relax. Introducing the weather shelter for smokers made of aluminium tubing and clear acrylic screens, which can be erected outside any office block to keep workers dry while they puff. And it's British. Yes, the Smoke Screen from the Nu Butts Bin Company of Poole, Dorset, starts at a mere £800 a go, compared with around £5,000 for the average bus shelter. A product to fire the imagination.

Price destruction becomes a martial art

ECONOMIC VIEW
HAMISH McRAE

The whiff of recession is in the air. In the last few days there have been new fears that the US might not manage the "soft landing" from its long expansion, that Germany has already fallen back into recession, and that Japan's recovery will not take place at all. Suddenly there is the prospect of three of the largest economies all heading south at the same time, a synchronised downturn.

One can explain the slowing in the US as a natural and inevitable pause after five years of solid growth.

One can explain the early German downturn, partly at least, by pointing to its tight monetary policy as the Bundesbank continued to correct (or over-correct) the inflationary forces generated by unification. But Germany did at least manage some recovery.

In Japan the experience is different in two respects: it is alone among the world's economies in that it has not really recovered at all; and it is experiencing falling prices. The searing effect of living with falling prices has been such that the expression "price destruction" has been coined to describe it.

Three measures of inflation – or rather price destruction – are shown in the graphs. The GDP deflator – the most representative of the three for it seeks to chart inflation in the whole economy – has been negative for a full year.

Long before that, back at the beginning of 1992, the wholesale price index went below zero, so the business community has had a full four years of coping with falling prices. Consumers, on the other hand, have only started to feel the benefit of this in the last few months, as the relatively inefficient distribution chain has offset the cuts in prices from the extremely efficient manufacturers.

Getting accustomed to a world of falling prices is quite difficult, as UK home owners have found. One obvious effect has been to make would-be borrowers even more cautious than they might otherwise be. Low interest rates do not therefore boost borrowing, as they might in an inflating economy. Commercial companies are under no pressure to invest; domestic consumers under no pressure to borrow either for consumption or house purchase. Further, low interest rates cut the income of savers and may on, balance, reduce overall demand.

Thus in real terms the latest figures for retail sales show them down 2.5 per cent year on year; household consumption is down 2.4 per cent; and department sales are down 1.8 per cent. But those are in real terms. In nominal terms, the amount of money the retailers are taking in their tills is down even more.

This experience at the shops is paralleled in the economy as a whole. The real economy, the figures that the official world looks at, is up 0.2 per cent year on year. In nominal terms – the yen in your pocket,– the economy is down 0.4 per cent.

The importance of this is that debts are in nominal, not real, terms. So indebted companies are not seeing loans whittled away by inflation, but their real burden increase, even if the company can continue to service the debt. It is as though the whole economy has been struck with the British homebuyers' experience of negative equity. On a current basis, and helped by low interest rates, people can live on in their home, despite having negative equity. But the debt overhang not only stops them from being able to move; it also casts a cloud over their other spending decisions.

The corollary of this is the impact on the lender. If a debt is being serviced, there is no need for a bank to write it off. But the knowledge that the capital value of that debt, in real terms, is mounting every year, is a powerful inhibition on other lending decisions. Maybe borrower X can service Y loan; but what happens when the loan has to be repaid? Inevitably, would-be borrowers are loath to borrow yet more and banks are loath to lend to new customers. Result: the Japanese economy is paralysed, like our housing market.

So what will happen? As always, there is a spread of views, but it is perhaps most helpful to shoe-horn them into two categories. One is the slow haul back; the other, that things have to get worse before they can get better.

The slow-haul-back camp would point to a number of signs of recovery. These include the weaker yen; the change in capital investment from being negative to being flat; and a slight rise in certain categories of consumer spending, such as cars.

The things-get-worse camp would argue that even the present bouncing along the bottom cannot continue for domestic and external reasons. The domestic reasons include the large fiscal deficit, now already 4 per cent of GDP and projected to deteriorate further; falling employment and rising unemployment; and low business confidence, particularly among small firms; and finally the still-unaddressed structural weaknesses of the Japanese economy.

Add to these woes, the international concerns, particularly that the world's largest and third-largest economies seem to be turning down together. Recession in the US and Germany would be devastating to Japan.

So what is to be done? Even the more optimistic scenario is dispiriting. Within the Japanese business community there is a growing view that structural reform is the best way of squaring the circle.

Freeing up the labour market would do something about the rising problem of youth unemployment. Encouraging self-employment (which is still falling in Japan) and new business creation would help revitalise the service sector.

In other words, Japan needs, some members of the business community believe, to become more "Anglo-Saxon" in its economic policies.

They note that the United States's share of world manufactured exports has passed Japan's (11.9 per cent against 11.4 per cent).

They note the emphasis on profit rather than unprofitable growth. They note the transparency of financial markets and company accounting.

Finally they have been chilled by the increasing evidence of sclerosis in Germany, the European economy that most closely resembles their own.

Funny, just at the time when the German and Japanese models are coming to be admired by some sectors of the British population, that both those countries are looking admiringly at the US, and even the UK? Meanwhile, we will have to learn from Japan about the martial art of price destruction.

150 jobs lost as Sugar goes ahead with Amstrad revamp

Wielding the axe: Alan Sugar insists that 'only lean organisations will flourish'

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Amstrad is to lose 150 jobs as part of the reorganisation that former chief executive David Rogers, who quit just before Christmas, refused to implement. The cuts confirm the threatened slimming down of the loss-making Amstrad Consumer Electronics subsidiary, once the core business but now just one part of a diversified group.

The restructuring of ACE means one of its two divisions, Amstrad Direct, will relocate to the Middlesex base of Viglen, the direct sales computer business Amstrad recently acquired. Amstrad Trading, which focuses on indirect retail sales of TVs, videos, satellite and audio equipment, will remain at Amstrad's Brentwood headquarters but in a pared down form.

Alan Sugar, chairman, said yesterday: "The market trend in consumer electronics means only lean organisations who concentrate on their core skills will flourish. This reorganisation puts Amstrad Trading and Amstrad Direct on a sound footing for the future and on an equal basis to their respective competitors."

David Rogers, who was brought into the company 18 months ago with a brief to build up the company's traditional business, resigned after Amstrad abandoned that strategy in favour of becoming a holding company for the acquisitions it has made in recent years. A search for a replacement is under way but an Amstrad spokesman warned that finding the right person might take some time.

Last October, Amstrad revealed that despite Mr Rogers' best efforts, ACE remained unprofitable, although the group as a whole had returned to the black thanks to the contribution from Viglen. A fuller picture will emerge on Thursday when Amstrad unveils interim figures for the six months to December.

After the departure of Mr Rogers, speculation was revived that Alan Sugar might be planning another bid to return the company he founded to private control. The company has denied a repeat of the buy-back attempt that dragged Mr Sugar into conflict with the City in 1992.

The ousting of Mr Rogers raised fears that Mr Sugar might be reverting to the assertive, hands-on management style that culminated in his failed attempt to buy back the two-thirds of Amstrad he does not already own.

IN BRIEF

Redland considering brick sale

Redland confirmed speculation that it was considering selling its brick manufacturing operation, but said any deal was not imminent. The building materials group will make an announcement when it has something definite to say. It is also looking into a restructuring of its European roof tile business, where its German subsidiary, Braas, is a big contributor to group profits. The proceeds of any sale are expected to be directed to Redland's Eastern tiles operation.

Suter results 'in line with expectations'

Suter, the diversified industrials group, said yesterday its 19[illegible] results before exceptionals would be "in line with current market expectations". The company, which recently disposed of a handful of other businesses, has decided to close its plastic component manufacturer Clearplas to focus on its core businesses of refrigeration, specialist engineering and chemicals.

Jefferson Smurfit apoints former PM

Jefferson Smurfit has appointed Albert Reynolds, the former Irish prime minister, as a non-executive director. The paper and packaging group also promoted Raymond Curran from chief financial officer to finance director.

Scottish shopping mall sold

PillarCaisse, a joint venture between the property investor and developer Pillar and La Caisse de Depot et Placement du Quebec is buying the Mercat Shopping Mall, in Kirkcaldy, Scotland, from Standard Life. The purchase price of £13.25m will give PillarCaisse an initial yield of around 10 per cent. Since the joint venture was formed in July 1994 it has spent about £70m building up its property portfolio.

Henderson profits flat

Henderson Administration, the investment management company said its funds had performed well against industry yardsticks but the group's first third-quarter report to shareholders. However, pre-tax profits remained almost flat at £14.9m in the nine months to December on revenue up from £50.8m to £51.5m.

CentreGold in bid talks

CentreGold, the video games to computer software group, has its shares suspended after it revealed it was in talks about a possible bid for the company. In a statement to the Stock Exchange CentreGold said negotiations were at an advanced stage. It added that preliminary results for the year to 4 August 1995 would be announced when the discussions ended.

Bloomsbury among the bestsellers

Bloomsbury Publishing has seen its strongest ever January book sales with three books in the top 10 bestseller lists. It has also signed several promising new titles.

Marling expands international interests

Marling Industries, the textiles group which also manufactures seat belt webbing, is expanding its international interests. In the US it has paid an initial £1.2m for the seat belt business of Woven Electronics with deferred payments of up to £2m to follow. It has also acquired a 25 per cent stake in Malaysia's only seat belt [illegible]

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
BA (Q3)	1.900bn (1.74bn)	104.0m (80.0m)	42.9p (33.6p)	- (-)
Cardiff Property (F)	1.16m (0.62m)	0.25m (0.19m)	6.8p (6.9p)	2.[illegible]p (2.6p)
Dalgety (I)	2.18bn (2.56bn)	69.4m (60.9m)	17.7p (16.9p)	8.5p (8.5p)
Henderson Admin (M)	51.5m (50.8m)	14.9m (14.9m)	46.54p (46.03p)	- (-)
Inveco (F)	22.6m (13.0m)	4.01m (0.85m)	1.94p (0.41p)	nil (nil)
Motor World Group (F)	55.0m (45.9m)	4.01m (4.47m)	18.37p (22.12p)	8.2p (7.7p)
VDC (I)	30.5m (25.7m)	0.73m (0.58m)	28.44p (22.5p)	5.5p (5.5p)
Waste Man Int'l (F)	1.16bn (1.12bn)	23.1m (16[illegible]m)	-0.9p (27.8p)	nil (nil)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim (M) - Nine months

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الأصل

market report/shares

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100
3746.6 -34.7

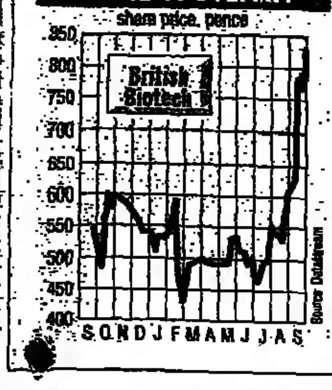
FT-SE 250
4136.4 -15.8

FT-SE 350
1864.1 -15.1

SEAQ VOLUME
656.9m shares,
36,602 bargains

Gilts Index
94.19 -0.69

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



BAe comes to earth on doubts over Fokker involvement

High-flying **British Aerospace** came down to earth with a bump. Worries that it could get involved in the rescue of Fokker, the ailiog Dutch aircraft group, and cautious commeots from Kleinwort Benson lowered the shares 24p to 875p.

Kleinwort has regarded BAe as a buy for the past three years. With the shares hitting a peak oo Friday the securities group felt obliged to withdraw its buy recommeodatioo.

Kleinwort's oegative approach cootrasts with other investment houses. There is a strong feeling in many quarters that BAe could, with the Orange mobile telephone flotation likely to provide further inspiration, move even higher.

But it was a poor day for most shares with the stock market suffering its sharpest reverse for seven weeks.

It was almost as if last week's record-breaking heroics had drained the market's energy. In lacklustre trading the FT-SE 100 index *fell 34.7 points* to 3,746.6 with the failure of the expected big takeover bid to appear and a dull New York display responsible for much of the damage.

Yet, although the mood was cautious, takeover speculation was oot completely snuffed out. **British Gas**, as bid hopes mingled with talk of management changes, outpaced other blue chips with a 6p move to 244.5p.

Pearson, the banking and media group, put on 15p to 670p oo US take over hopes and **Mirror Group Newspapers** was also drawn into the bid arena with a 4p gain to 195p, a 12 mooth high.

British Airways' slower traffic growth lowered the shares 19p to 502p and the signalled Orange share sale and Cellnet price reductioos depressed **Vodafone**, off 6.5p to 237.5p.

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

Standard Chartered, the banking group, lost 14.5p to 635p and **Yorkshire Electricity** 8p to 744p, as the rumoured bids failed to appear.

Oriel, an insurance broker, did manage to produce a little takeover excitement. Its admission that talks were oo justified a 15p gain to 126p. **CentreGold** was suspeoded at 37p after its long-running bid talks seemed near fruition.

Bardon, the aggregates group, firmed to 40p despite reported denials from **Camas** that it was the rumoured bidder. Camas shaded to 83p.

Supermarkets had a cut-price session as profit downgradings wafted arouod. Evidence is growing that the curreot price war is oot as phoney as some cynics maintain. The four leaders gave ground and **Frost**, the petrol retailer caught in the cross-fire of the forecourt battle between supermarkets and oil giaots, lost a further 9p to 115p, lowest since 1992.

Zeneca recovered some of its poise after Friday's fiasco when at one time the shares were down 70p on wild rumours of problems with its asthma drug. The price firmed 3p to 1,248p.

A presentation at Panmure Gordon, the stockbroker, left **ML Laboratories** 18p off at 436p. **Smith & Nephew** added 2p to 180.5p, rekindling takeover hopes.

Reuters, with an estimated £800m in the bank, fell 9p to 630p despite a revival of stories it plans a share buy-back.

Pan Andean Resources, seeking oil in Bolivia, rose 4p to 36p. The shares were 12.5p last year. **Ennex International**, a gold miner, added 2p to 14p helped by the firmer gold price. **Bakyrchik Gold**, seeking the metal in Russia, was also up, 11p at 501p.

Middlesex, the metals group, edged ahead 0.25p to 8.25p as it landed a $300m deal with Russia's most automated steel works. The link confirms Sir David Alliance's deeper involvement. He will have a 24.5 per cent stake in the Middlesex subsidiary set up to handle the deal. There is talk Middlesex has a more intriguing announcemeot in the pipeline.

Norcor, a maker of corrugated steel board for the packaging industry, rose 3p to 82p as Australian Pratt Industries picked up a 7.63 per ceot shareholding.

Omnicare, a provider of home health-care, held at 84p. Stockbroker Astair & Partners forecast profits of £750,000 oext year.

Danka Business Systems, largely US owned, gained 11p to 640p. Ahead of a US offering it is holding investment presentations.

Continental Foods, interim figures tomorrow, gained 6p to 83p.

WT Foods held steady. Formerly called West Trust, the company has a range of overseas foods, particularly Caribbeao, Indian and Mexican. There are suggestions that it is involved in talks which could, in effect, lead to a reverse take over by an unquoted food group which has decided to avoid a straightforward share flotation.

TAKING STOCK

❑ **In a classic marriage of convenience Brackenbridge, the Pronupta bridalwear group, has merged with Langside Hire to create the Formal Group.**

The shares, suspended while the deal was *stitched together*, were heavily traded when dealings resumed yesterday.

As part of a rescue refinancing 101.3 million new shares were placed with institutions while others were offered to existing shareholders.

❑ **A rights issue, perhaps £5m, is thought to be imminent at Tepnel Life Sciences, a biotechnology business which has had a difficult time.**

The shares were firm yesterday, largely on a tip sheet recommendation.

In its last reported full year the company lost £2.4m and there was a £890,000 deficit at its last half-year.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.
Other details: xr Ex rights x Ex-dividend xa Ex all u Unlisted Securities Market s Suspended pp Partly Paid pm Nil Paid Shares. Source: Finstat.

The Independent Index

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FT-SE 100 – Real-time	00	Sterling Rates	04	Privatisation Issues	38
UK Stock Market Report	01	Bullion Report	05	Water Shares	39
UK Company News	02	Wall St Report	20	Electricity Shares	40
Foreign Exchange	03	Tokyo Market	21	High Street Banks	41

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Calls cost 39p per minute (cheap rate), and 49p at all other times. Call charges include

Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000
British Gas	2200000	Burton	1000000	Tarmac	780000	Cable & Wire	650000
Vodafone	2000000	Blue Circle	1000000	BP	760000	Marks & Spencer	630000
Hanson	1600000	ASDA Group	910000	Dixons	730000	BTR	650000
British Steel	1300000	Glaxo Wellcome	870000	Rolls Royce	730000	BAA	590000
British Airways	1100000	Sears	840000	Smith & Nephew	660000	Boots	580000

FT-SE 100 Index hour by hour

Open 3763.0 down 18.3	11.00 3761.7 down 19.6	14.00 3753.4 down 27.9
09.00 3764.4 down 16.9	12.00 3761.9 down 19.4	15.00 3744.6 down 36.7
10.00 3758.0 down 23.3	13.00 3758.2 down 25.1	16.00 3750.4 down 30.9
		Close 3746.8 down 34.7

Alcoholic Beverages [illegible]

Banks, Merchant [illegible]

Banks, Retail [illegible]

Breweries, Pubs & Rest [illegible]

Building/Construction [illegible]

Building Materials [illegible]

Chemicals [illegible]

Distributors [illegible]

Diversified Industrials [illegible]

Electricity [illegible]

Electronics [illegible]

Engineering [illegible]

Engineering Vehicles [illegible]

Extractive Industries [illegible]

Food Manufacturers [illegible]

Gas Distribution [illegible]

Health Care [illegible]

Household Goods [illegible]

Insurance [illegible]

Internationals [illegible]

Investment Companies [illegible]

Investment Trusts [illegible]

Leisure & Hotels [illegible]

Life Assurance [illegible]

Media [illegible]

Oil Exploration [illegible]

Oil, Integrated [illegible]

Other Financial [illegible]

Pharmaceuticals [illegible]

Printing & Paper [illegible]

Property [illegible]

Retailers, Food [illegible]

Retailers, General [illegible]

Support Services [illegible]

Telecommunications [illegible]

Textiles & Apparel [illegible]

Transport [illegible]

Water [illegible]

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Government Securities

Index-linked [illegible]

Undated [illegible]

Shorts [illegible]

Mediums [illegible]

Longs [illegible]

Rights Issues [illegible]

Recent Issues [illegible]

unit trusts/data

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
AIB Unit Trust Managers Limited			
Grofund American	2044	2163	0.22
Grofund Equity	2763	2939	1.64
Grofund Euro	2385	2382	0.74
Grofund Extr Balanced	1311	1358	5.4
Grofund Gilt	7457	7894	4.81
Grofund Japan	984	1024	0.00
AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust Managers AXA Equity & Law Hse, Corporation St, Coventry CV1 1GD Tel: 01203 553231			
General Acc	6367	6724	2.49
General Inc	5420	5820	2.49
UK Growth Acc	4314	4590	2.68
UK Growth Inc	2824	3058	2.68
Higher Inc Acc	7862	8384	4.65
Higher Inc Inc	4374	4654	4.65
Gilt/Fxd Int Acc	2035	2110	8.40
Gilt/Fxd Int Inc	9484	1002	5.46
Nth America	3482	3705	0.00
Europe	3301	3512	0.81
Japan Tst Acc	4871	5119	0.00
Pacific Basin Tst Acc	4312	4588	0.71
Brit Excell	8682	9141	2.83
Brit Fndmtls Acc	1142	1215	4.81
Brit Fndmtls Inc	7695	8696	4.81
Global Opps	9878	1051	0.17
Balanced Acc	8223	8831	2.65
Balanced Inc	5984	6345	2.66
Abbey Unit Trust Managers			
High Income			
Extra Income	4456	4740	d6.46
Gilts & Fixed Int	1312	1339	7.16
High Inc Equity	1734	1818	d4.50
Managed Income	4803	5119	d4.65
Worldwide Bond	2893	3087	d4.68
Capital Growth			
American Growth	3494	3734	0.05
Asian Pacific	3550	3787	.31
Assets & Earnings	2985	3154	2.71
Capital Reserve Acc	1410	1412	4.98
Euro Capital Acc	1888	1781	.38
Euro Capital Inc	1053	1130	.38
General	2712	2885	d2.89
Japan	1269	1379	-
Maestrum	1831	1744	1.40
US Emerging Cos	1820	1836	-
Ethical	7640	8128	2.50
International	1355	1442	.71
Dividend & Growth	6699	7095	d4.33
Global Gwth & Sec	7160	7648	2.46
Abtrust Fund Managers Ltd			
Amer Inc & Growth	5785	6007	0.51
Cash	5047	5047	5.78
Emerging Mkts	7406	7849	0.04
European	1315	1388	d0.00
Exempt	1017	10802	d1.72
Extra Income	4881	5214	6.52
Far East Emerg Econs	1301	1398	0.45
Fixed Interest	2382	2457	d8.56
Fund Inc Tst	1619	1700	d8.65
Fund Inv Tst Acc	2859	3002	d8.73
Japan	1009	1088	0.00
Latin American	5732	6003	0.01
Pacific	8820	3261	0.28
Property Share	6308	6622	d2.65
UK Emerging Cos	6929	7430	d1.67
UK Growth	5073	5364	2.19
Aberdeen World Ptolio	8163	8115	1.97
Ethical	7549	7854	2.24
Aberdeen Gilt Income	5056	5096	7.36
Allchurches Inc Mgmt Servs Ltd			
Amity Income	8501	9020	2.25
Amity Accum	1051	1152	2.25
Income Builder Inc	7841	8342	2.75
Income Builder Acc	10338	10998	2.75
Allied Dunbar Unit Tsts PLC			
Balanced Trusts			
Growth & Income	2665	2848	1.26
Capital	4705	5029	1.25
Balanced	7717	8249	d2.52
Accumulator	1480	1582	1.97
Income Trusts			
American Income	5899	6299	d2.54
High Income	4367	4689	4.04
Equity Income	2427	2594	d4.06
High Yield	2639	2821	4.14
Govt Securities	3442	3632	6.01
International Trusts			
Amer Spec Sits	1984	2118	0.05
European Growth	4483	4774	0.00
International	1964	2012	d0.71
Japan	2117	2263	d
Pacific	4428	4731	
Secs of America	5480	5835	0.3
W'wide Asset Val	5547	5929	0.62
Specialist Trusts			
Asset Value	5882	6258	1.60
Conv & Gilt	4567	4882	d4.44
Smaller Cos	1936	2069	d1.06
2nd Smaller Cos	1839	1889	0.94
Recovery	1563	1570	1.59
Met Min & Cmdty	1809	1933	0.00
O'seas Earnings	3972	4245	d1.18
Technology	2123	2359	d
UK Special Sits	5413	5788	d1.06
Arbuthnot Unit Trust Mgmt Ltd			
Growth Inc	16410	17395	0.59
Do Accum	24131	25791	0.59
BSI-Thornhill Unit Trust Mgrs			
Capital	7958	8468	d1.74
International	7062	7534	
BWD Rensburg Unit Trust Managers			
International Gwth Tst	9486	9990	0.61
UK Nat Smlr Cos Tst	1777	12630	d1.84
Balanced Portfolio	16807	17833	d1.19
Baillie Gifford & Co Ltd			
BG America	3204	3429	-
BG International	8739	9298	2.10
BG British Smlr Cos	1124	1198	d1.71
BG Bond	1185	1258	d8.69
BG Conv & Gen	6951	7395	5.34
BG European Smlr Cos	1134	1213	0.63
BG Europe	2545	2704	0.57
BG Income	3815	4059	3.79
BG Japan	3324	3539	-
BG Pacific	1216	1294	0.11
BG UK Smlr Cos	5777	6148	d1.20
Japan Fd	7005	7223	-
Mngd Fd	1923	2696	2.63
Bank of Ireland Fund Mgrs Ltd			
Brit & O'seas	3538	3790	0.69
Capital Gwth	1241	1319	2.49
W'wide Opps	2202	2329	0.92
Exempt Funds			
Exempt Mngd Growth	1053	1125	2.53
Exempt Equity Gwth	1108	1264	1.86
Exempt Fixed Interest	9075	9986	4.89
Barclays Unicorn Limited 11 Broadway, Stratford, London, E15 4BJ Tel: 0181 5346544			
Balanced Trusts			
B'tal Inv Fd Acc	8354	8702	2.53
B'tal Inv Fd Inc	4927	4994	2.53
European Bd Acc	1127	1167	6.89
European Bd Inc	8539	9874	d6.89
Exempt	7997	8531	3.97
Financial	9499	1016	2.45
500	4858	5252	2.61
General	3089	3307	2.49
Property	2405	2581	d6.47
Trustee	2141	2284	d2.22
Income Trusts			
Cash Acc	1208	1208	5.64
Cash Inc	1004	1004	d5.64
Extra Income	1324	1415	4.86
Gilt & Fxd Int	5878	6086	8.12
Income	5732	6130	d4.7
Income Builder	6900	7380	5.34
Intl Income	7057	7508	4.81
Growth Trusts - UK			
Capital	1350	1440	d2.03
Growth Acc	4056	4327	1.98
Leisure (z)	1598	1709	0.82
Recovery	4634	4957	2.71
Smlr Cos Acc	5053	5383	2.17
Smlr Cos Inc	5131	5503	2.17
Special Sits	3550	3787	1.33
Growth Trusts - Overseas			
America	1653	1755	0.3
Amer Recovery Acc	1204	1283	
Aust Acc	2779	2968	1.94
Aust Inc	1675	1790	1.94
Euro Gwth Acc	1887	2003	0.56
Euro Gwth Inc	1748	1854	0.56
Japan & Gen Acc	1643	1740	
Japan & Gen Inc	1625	1720	
Japan Spec Sits	7430	7871	
Worldwide	1943	2069	d0.52
Baring Fund Managers Ltd PO Box 631, 155 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 3TQ Enq: 0171 732 9450			
American Growth	1230	1300	0.0
American Smlr Cos	1523	1633	0.0
Convertibles	5775	6205	d4.9
Eastern	3337	3600	0.3
Equity Income	9183	9640	d3.8
European Growth	3405	3618	0.8
Europe Select	2883	3073	1.9
Exempt	1011	1042	d3.0
German Growth	8536	9043	0.5
Global Bond	6999	7354	d6.5
Global Growth	1458	1563	0.4
Japan Growth	2102	2242	0.0
Japan Sunrise	1682	1792	0.0
Korea Trust	7733	8437	0.0
Portfolio	1435	1538	2.3
Portfolio Acc	2671	2865	2.3
UK Growth	9439	1011	2.8
UK Smaller Cos	8633	9430	2.5
Select Managers	8607	8224	1.0
Charity Fund			
Overseas Gwth Exempt	7363	7473	0.1
Britannia Fund Managers Ltd			
Balanced Growth	12942	13895	1.50
Do (Accum)	14806	15699	1.50
UK General	8748	9255	d3.22
Do (Accum)	9207	9743	3.22
Smaller Cos	1303	13876	0.70
Do (Accum)	14630	15481	0.70
Japan	6235	6596	d0.00
Do (Accum)	6236	6598	0.00
European Growth	14875	15741	0.30
Do (Accum)	15186	16051	0.30
Pacific Growth Inc	8285	8874	0.31
Do (Accum)	8316	8820	0.31
Higher Yield	5265	5572	d4.33
Do (Accum)	8100	8571	4.53
American Gth Inc	9235	9763	d0.00
Do (Accum)	9401	9948	0.00
Intl Special Opps	15161	16065	0.00
Do (Accum)	15126	16082	0.00
Global Bond Inc	2774	2875	7.09
Do (Accum)	3892	4054	7.09
Gilt & Fixed Interest	10161	10530	8.29
Do (Accum)	11104	11507	8.29
Managed P'tfolio Inc	5003	5292	1.37
(Do Accum)	5131	5428	1.37
Burrage Unit Tst Management Ltd			
Short Dated Gilt	6815	6902	8.05
CIS Unit Managers Ltd			
Environ	1757	1868	1.80
UK Growth	1949	2064	d1.96
UK Income	1452	1545	4.36
Canada Life Unit Trust Managers Ltd			
Canlife Gen Dist	2239	2374	d1.67
Do Gen Accum	4361	4623	1.67
Do Income Dist	1209	1261	3.90
Do Inc Accum	3804	4032	3.90
Do Gilt & Fixed Interest	4068	4312	d6.33
Do Growth Units	2374	2537	2.03
Do Bond	1783	1861	7.09
Do Intl Growth	2438	2581	0.21
Do North American	2446	2603	0.31
Do Far East	3284	3512	0.81
Do UK Smaller Cos	2036	2178	1.28
Do European	9277	9861	0.65
Do Japanese Growth	4847	5252	0.00
Do High Income	2130	2278	3.31
Do Balanced	5408	5772	2.11
Capel-Cure Myers Unit Tst Managers Ltd			
Capability Funds			
American & Gen	19910	21130	
(Accum Units)	21170	22530	
European Inc	8874	9394	0.86
(Accum Units)	9325	9872	0.86
Japan & Gen	7195	7638	
(Accum Units)	7195	7638	
Smaller Cos	9651	10258	1.45
(Accum Units)	11257	11876	1.45
Growth	48490	52550	1.74
(Accum Units)	86510	88230	1.74
Income & Growth	44500	47350	d3.42
(Accum Units)	65770	69970	3.42
Master Portfolio	1139100	1169400	d2.18
(Accum Units)	1360300	1434500	2.12
Special Sits	11530	12270	d1.81
(Accum Units)	14810	15230	1.81
Exempt Fund			
High Yield	148200	149700	4.28
(Accum Units)	188100	194000	4.28
Cazenove Unit Trust Management Ltd			
Cazenove Portfolio	9241	10284	d2.46
American Portfolio	1940	1025	0.82
European Portfolio	1979	1943	0.48
Japanese Portfolio	7056	7501	d0.00
Pacific Portfolio	16345	17576	1.35
UK Income & Growth	9191	9421	2.88
Utility & Bond	6795	6864	6.50
Clerical Medical Unit Trust Managers Ltd			
American Gwth	7588	8081	0.00
Controlled Growth Acc	2407	2558	0.00
Dragon Growth	7680	8220	0.38
Equity High Inc Inc	3085	3344	4.59
Equity High Inc Acc	12671	13480	4.03
European Gwth	5870	6254	1.62
Evergreen	2981	3108	0.00
General Equity	9778	10375	2.08
Japan Growth	9335	9476	0.00
Pedigree Gwth	5920	6298	2.54
Pnd Sm Cos Inc	3473	3685	1.51
Pnd Sm Cos Acc	3658	3881	1.51
Retirement Inc	2604	2663	5.86
Retirement Acc	4417	4599	5.66
Special Sits	4472	4757	1.99
UK & Overseas	5247	6006	0.60
Commercial Union Trust Managers			
Prestige Portfolio (PPT Funds)			
Income Funds			
Equity Income	17967	19114	4.58

Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	DOLLAR Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1.5327	12-10	35-32	1.000	-	-
Canada	2.1101	20-12	53-41	1.3768	0-3	0-5
Germany	2.2520	55-48	169-154	1.4693	24-22	73-70
France	7.7465	123-104	338-299	5.0555	40-35	105-101
Italy	2404.8	82-76	198-222	1569.0	53-60	185-177
Japan	161.12	77-73	230-223	105.12	43-42	130-128
ECU	1.2276	16-13	49-43	1.2484	2-4	5-8
Belgium	46.318	18-8	36-31	30.220	55-45	160-140
Denmark	8.7153	148-108	429-335	5.6863	32-32	80-100
Netherlands	2.5229	66-57	203-190	1.6461	32-29	98-93
Ireland	0.9690	12-8	29-28	1.5818	3-6	8-11
Norway	9.8416	93-41	257-160	6.4211	35-10	130-80
Spain	190.40	40-49	116-135	124.22	37-42	109-117
Sweden	10.647	15-21	45-58	6.9467	158-165	440-490
Switzerland	1.8400	69-59	196-186	1.2005	36-34	105-102
Australia*	2.0081	19-25	50-69	1.3231	19-21	54-58
Hong Kong	11.849	99-80	248-178	7.7310	2-12	15-35
Malaysia	3.9023	0-0	0-0	2.5460	4-14	60-80
New Zealand*	2.2631	29-42	100-121	1.4765	30-32	86-80
Saudi Arabia	5.7484	0-0	0-0	3.7505	2-7	9-16
Singapore	2.1676	0-0	0-0	1.4142	41-90	108-84

OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling
Argentina	1.5328	0.9999	Nigeria	33.2145
Austria	15.8359	10.3320	Oman	0.5902
Brazil	1.4997	0.9783	Pakistan	52.5783
China	12.7440	8.3131	Philippines	40.148
Egypt	5.2077	3.3984	Portugal	233.928
Finland	6.9373	4.5253	Qatar	5.5775
Ghana	2292.47	1496.00	Russia	7252.85
Greece	373.362	243.550	South Africa	5.5975
India	58.0694	37.9000	Taiwan	42.180
Kuwait	0.4588	0.2995	UAE	5.6307

Note: Forward rates quoted high & low are at a discount (subtract from spot rate), those quoted low to high are at a premium (add to spot rate). *Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals. For further foreign exchange rates call 0891 123 3033. Calls cost 39p per minute (cheap rate 49p other times).

Tourist Rates

£ Buys		£ Buys		£ Buys	
Australia(Dollars)	1.9850	France(Francs)	7.5800	New Zealand(Dollars)	[illegible]
Austria(Schillings)	15.3000	Germany(Marks)	2.2000	Norway(Kroner)	[illegible]
Belgium(Francs)	45.0000	Greece(Drachma)	370.0000	Portugal(Escudos)	[illegible]
Canada(Dollars)	2.0600	Hong Kong(Dollars)	11.6500	Spain(Pesetas)	[illegible]
Cyprus(Pounds)	0.7075	Ireland(Punts)	0.9625	Sweden(Kronor)	[illegible]
Denmark(Kroner)	8.5200	Italy(Lira)	2370.0000	Switzerland(Francs)	[illegible]
Holland(Guilders)	2.4725	Japan(Yen)	160.0000	Turkey(Lira)	[illegible]
Finland(Marks)	6.8900	Malta(Lira)	0.5405	United States(Dollars)	[illegible]

Interest Rates

UK		Germany		US		Japan	
Base	6.25%	Discount	3.00%	Prime	8.75%	Discount	[illegible]
France		Lombard	5.00%	Discount	5.00%	Belgium	[illegible]
Intervention	4.05%	Canada		Fed Funds	5.25%	Discount	[illegible]
Italy		Prime	7.75%	Spain		Central	[illegible]
Discount	9.00%	Discount	5.73%	10-Day Repo	9.25%	Switzerland	[illegible]
Netherlands		Denmark		Sweden		Discount	[illegible]
Advances	3.00%	Discount	4.25%	Repo (Ave)	8.48%	Lombard	[illegible]

Bond Yields

Country	5yr	yield %	10yr	yield %	Country	5yr	yield %	10yr	yield %
UK	8%	7.03	8¾%	7.71	Netherlands	9%	5.08	[illegible]	[illegible]
US	5⅛%	5.31	5⅝%	5.70	Spain	10¼%	9.26	[illegible]	[illegible]
Japan	6¼%	1.94	4⅜%	3.09	Italy	10½%	9.65	[illegible]	[illegible]
Australia	8¾%	7.70	10%	8.19	Belgium	7¼%	5.38	[illegible]	[illegible]
Germany	5¾%	4.36	6%	6.13	Sweden	11%**	7.88	[illegible]	[illegible]
France	5¾%	5.54	7¼%	6.56	ECU OAT	8¼%	6.52	7¼%	[illegible]

Source: HSBC Markets Research. Yields calculated on local basis. ** Denotes coupon

Money Market Rates

	O'Night		7 Day		1 Month		3 Months		6 Months	
Interbank	6	6¼	6⅛	6¼	6⅛	6¼	6⅛	6¼	6⅛	6¼
Sterling CDs	-		-		6⅛		6⅛		6⅛	
Local Authority Deps	6¼		6¼		6¼		6⅛		6⅛	
Discount Market Deps	6⅛		6¼							
Treasury Bills (Buy)	-		-		6¼		6⅛			
Dollar CDs	-		-		5.10		5.10		5.00	
ECU Linked Dep	-		-		4⅞	4⅝	4⅝	4½	4⅝	4⅝

Liffe Financial Futures

Contract		Settlement price	High/Low for day		Est.Conts traded
Long Gilt	(Mar 96)	109-18	109-14	109-10	67796
German Bond	(Mar 96)	98.34	98.34	98.15	338236
J.G.Bond	(Mar 96)	120.18	120.13	120.00	2847
Italian Bond	(Mar 96)	111.40	111.70	110.88	54412
3M Sterling	(Mar 96)	93.87	93.89	93.86	11087
	(Jun 96)	94.08	94.11	94.05	21884
3M Euro $	(Mar 96)	94.80			0
3M Euromark	(Mar 96)	96.78	96.79	96.77	30086
	(Jun 96)	96.80	96.87	96.78	49532
E.C.U.	(Mar 96)	95.46	95.45	95.41	730
	(Jun 96)	95.55	95.57	95.52	616
Euro SFr	(Mar 96)	98.02	98.07	97.96	5403
FT-SE 100	(Mar 96)	3763.0	3777.0	3751.0	11883
FT-SE 250	(Mar 96)	4150.0			0
Eurolira	(Mar 96)	90.54	90.60	90.45	881

Liffe FT-SE Index Option

Settlement price: 3750.0 — closing offer price

Series	3650	3700	3750	3800
February	113/4	89/11	32/25	11/56
March	133/21	95/33	64/53	38/79
April	143/40	111/58	81/77	58/104
May	161/58	129/72	100/93	76/119

Commodities

INDUSTRIAL METALS - London Metal Exchange

$/tonne		Cash	3 mths	Volume	LME Stocks
Alu	HG	1584.5-85.5	1607-08	43560	650600
Alu	Alloy	1350-55	1383-85	2089	67220
Copper	A	2582-64	2517-18	69832	353700
Lead		767.5-68.5	821.5-27	8909	108950
Nickel		8375-85	8475-80	10822	40470
Tin		6175-85	6215-20	4048	11190
Zinc		1053.5-54.5	1074-75	42026	647350

Settlement Conversion exchange rates: £/$ 1.5207; $/Dm 1.4745; $/¥ 105.28. Stock volumes & change in tonnes as at Friday 2 February

PRECIOUS METALS

per fin /oz	$	£	Coins	$	£		$	£
Platinum	431.50	282.40	Britannia	430	280	Krugrands	405/18	264/77
Palladium	141.00	90.45	Britannia.5 oz	213	138	Sovs	97/101	63/66
Silver spot	5.79	3.78	Britannia.25 oz	107	70	Nobles	424/39	276/86
Gold Bu'n	414.80	270.85	Britannia.10 oz	54	35	Maple Leaf	418/30	271/86

Other Softs (Agricultural)

Jan	Maize (No.3)**	$/tonne	150.5	Feb	Soya Oils	FL/100kg	905
Feb/Mar	Copra (†)	$/tonne	185.0	Feb/Mar	Coconut Oil (†)	$/tonne	7450
Mar	Cotton (NY)	UScent/lb	86.35	Feb/Mar	Sunflower Oils	$/tonne	610
Feb	Wool	Acent/kg	665.0	Feb	Rapeseed Oils	FL/100kg	665
Mar	Rubber*	Mcent/kg	384.0	Feb/Mar	Groundnut Oil	$/tonne	835

ENERGY — Brent Crude

IPE	5.30pm	*chg	Yr ago	IPE Gasoil	close	*chg	WTI	Products †
Mar	16.67	-0.00	17.16	Feb	159.50	+6.00	Mar 17.55	Leaded Gasoline
Apr	16.14	-0.09	16.61	Mar	155.75	+1.25	Apr 17.20	Naphtha
May	15.89	-0.10	16.51	Apr	149.25	+0.00	May 17.00	EC Gasoil
Vol: 37,129				Vol:	34,176		June 16.95	Heavy Fuel Oil

*since 5.30pm previous day. Year ago prices show average for week. Source: ICIS-London Oil Reports

UNIT TRUST GUIDE: d ex dividend; e exit charge when units sold; buy formerly 'offer'; sell formerly 'bid'; x Non SIB recognised funds

هكذا من الأصل

The bull hitters perfect driving to a tee

Tim Glover meets two golfers whose reputation as the biggest swingers is founded in fact

Long distance drivers: Mark Glynn (left) and Rick Adams swing into action to demonstrate a technique that is the envy of Jack Nicklaus. The pair are the mightiest hitters of a golf ball in history, according to Guinness *Photograph: Robert Hallam*

Mark Glynn was on the practice ground at a course in Bermuda, hitting golf balls into the sea, as you do, when Jack Nicklaus wandered over and asked him if he'd like to play nine holes. "At first I thought he was talking to somebody else," Glynn said. "It was like meeting the Queen."

When Big Jack saw the full extent of Glynn's prodigious hitting, the thought might have crossed his mind that he was playing with King Kong. "If I could have generated that kind of power, I would have won every major I ever entered," Nicklaus said. "I have never seen anyone strike the ball like that."

Even if you credit the word of the Golden Bear with a touch of hyperbole, the fact is that Glynn and his partner Rick Adams are the mightiest hitters of a golf ball in history. It's official. Last summer Glynn and Adams, who are now established as the Titleist Long Drive Team, set a benchmark with a blow of 351 yards at Formby Hall Golf Club in Southport. A few weeks later at Witney in Oxfordshire they increased the distance to 359 yards.

The point about both drives, which were measured by professional surveyors, is that they were all carry, that is the distance to where the ball pitched on landing not to where it came to rest. No wind, no slope, no roll. After meticulous scrutiny, Guinness have just ratified the achievements as world records.

"John Daly?" Glynn said, almost spitting the name out, "either of us would carry the ball 60 yards past him. It is no gimmick, there's no trickery. It's a question of timing, technique, strength and equipment. Everything we use is perfectly legal. Some long hitters, using top spin, measure drives to where the ball finishes. That's crap. With roll we had a drive once at Hill Valley in Shropshire of 457 yards."

Yesterday the two heavyweights (Glynn is 16st 10lb, Adams 16st 1lb, both 6ft 2in) launched their touring show at Stockley Park, a European Tour course near Heathrow. Today they fly to South Africa, followed by Jamaica. Both are professional golfers and are coached by Gavin Christie, the man who looks after the swings of the Ryder Cup players Mark James and Howard Clark.

Glynn, a martial arts expert, used to play rugby league as a teenager for St Helens and Warrington; Adams once played centre-half for Manchester City. "I made 15 appearances in the first team," Adams said, "but at the time City were managed by John Bond and he was never going to drop his son Kevin from the back four. I was an animal."

Apart from their immense forearm strength, one of the keys to their striking is a club-head velocity approaching 200mph. Daly's is around 160mph, the average player's 110mph. For the technically minded they use titanium Starship or Howitzer drivers, an inch or two shorter than the maximum club length of 47 inches permitted by Guinness for record attempts, and Titleist PTS two-piece balls. "We can clear any obstacle on any golf course," Glynn said. "We are also consistent. Nobody strikes the ball like us. We are everybody's fantasy."

If Glynn (the only player ever to drive the green at The Belfry's famous 18th hole) and Adams are not just bull hitters, why can't they make a handsome living on the pro tour? "It's a question of financial backing," Glynn said. "Until you've stood on the first tee not knowing whether you're going to make a penny you don't know what it's like. It's an unbelievable experience. I know pros who are struggling to buy petrol for their car."

In golf they say drive for show, putt for dough. With Glynn and Adams it's drive for show and dough. As they went through their routine at Stockley Park, Ruud Gullit arrived to play a round. The Chelsea player may be able to show Adams a thing or two about modern football but he wouldn't get within a country mile of him off the tee.

Woosnam rediscovers his wizardry

After successive wins it is the former world No 1's caddie who is afraid of the cut. **Andrew Farrell** reports

In Singapore last week, Ian Woosnam's caddie, Phil Morbey, better known simply as Wobbly, had a bet with Sam Torrance. The next time Woosie won, something he had not done for 16 months, Wobbly would do a John Daly: shave his head.

His timing could not have been worse. But despite spirited celebrations when Woosnam sealed the Johnnie Walker Classic, the Welshman saved his caddie from Torrance's shears. Having refound his form, the last thing Woosnam wanted was a literally wobbly caddie in Perth, Australia, last week, where temperatures soared over 100 degrees, or this week in Sun City. Quite what retribution Torrance will exact after Woosnam won the Heineken Classic on Sunday remains to be seen.

The last time Woosnam won in successive weeks was in 1990. The following year he became the world No 1 and won the US Masters. Since then victories continued at periodic intervals, until last year, his first without one for 10 years. But each time he expressed doubts that he was truly on his peak form. More often than not a quick tip had set him right, but it would not last. So asked, after his 28th and 29th European wins, when the last time he felt as good about his game, the answer was significant: "Not since 1991."

His other key comment in Perth concerned his back. Woosnam suffers from spondulitis, where two vertebrae are rubbing together. He said: "Even if I start playing badly again, I'm not going to worry. With my back, every day I can play is a bonus."

After withdrawing from the World Cup in November, Woosnam packed in golf for the winter. He went to see a back specialist and was told not to lift anything. Nor exercise. "Sounds great," Woosie said. And to do some swimming, now and again. "Now and again, this is for me.

"I tried to do everything the right way and that didn't work for me," Woosnam explained. "Two winters ago I exercised a lot, sit up, jogging, presses up. The formula for me is relaxation. I had a nice winter. I became the best in the world doing it my way and I thought I had to change to stay the best."

That included his swing, which Seve Ballesteros once described as the "sweetest in Europe". He was in the middle of a swing change when he went to the Heineken Classic two years ago. He missed the cut. "Obviously, it didn't work." The problem was going back to his original style. Doing a programme for the *Peak Performance* series on ITV helped. He could see the difference when he won the Masters in 1991 and last year. His weight transfer was appalling, leading to a lack of power and control.

Last year, Woosnam played a number of practice rounds with Colin Montgomerie, who is coached by Bill Ferguson. "I was right off the feeling of coaches," Woosnam said, "but I liked the way Bill taught. He simplifies everything. It's just rhythm and keeping the clubface on line. I can't think about lots of different things. I'm a natural. I just pick up a club and swing."

The way he has won has been that of a world top 10 player, not one who had slumped to 57th two weeks ago. In Singapore, he birdied the last, then beat Andrew Coltart in the three-hole play-off. On Sunday, he again birdied the last to beat Paul McGinley and Jean van de Velde by one stroke. Woosnam cannot wait for the Masters in April. Wobbly is just dreading Sam Torrance's scissors.

Drugs warning to jockeys

Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON

The Jockey Club has launched a programme for jockeys on drug awareness. (This does not mean tips on the best gear to buy or cultivation techniques).

Portman Square's medical adviser, Dr Michael Turner, has supervised an initiative which includes discussion on weight control, nutrition and dehydration. But the first topic dealt with is drugs, and a booklet produced by the charity *Lifeline* has been sent to all apprentice and conditional jockeys in an effort to keep them off the first strand of the pharmaceutical web.

"We have distributed this excellent booklet to make sure that all young jockeys fully understand the risks involved," Dr Turner said yesterday. "There is not the slightest evidence that jockeys are taking drugs on a larger scale than others in this age group. In fact, there are good indications that the problem is considerably smaller in racing than in society at large."

One of the smaller number was punished yesterday, however, when Darren Salter, a claimer attached to the West Country stable of Rod Millman, was banned for 21 days. Salter, 23, who has won 20 races since taking out a riding licence in 1989, was the second jockey to fail a drugs test after traces of cannabis were found in a urine sample he gave at Chepstow in November. The first transgressor was Sean McCarthy, an apprentice who delivered a sample bearing cannabis and amphetamines in October.

> **RICHARD EDMONDSON**
> **NAP: Montone**
> **(Lingfield 4.20)**
> **NB: Lochon**
> **(Lingfield 3.50)**

"I deeply regret having had to appear before the disciplinary committee," Salter said. "The positive test for cannabis was as a result of my unknowingly consuming the drug in cake form at a party."

In other cases at Portman Square there were suggestions that Johnnie Cochran and the boys must be in town as the hanging judges unusually upheld two pleas from trainers.

Len Lungo, the Dumfriesshire trainer, and jockey Tim Reed went the long route, taking four and a half hours to convince inquisitors that Livio was not being schooled in public when eighth at Haydock in December. The gelding subsequently won when favourite at Catterick, a victory which twitched officialdom's antennae.

"Considering the difference in quality of the Haydock and Catterick races, and considering that it was admitted in the inquiry that Livio had been dropped 4lb in error between the two races, the Catterick win came as no surprise," Lungo said. "The betting-intelligence officer said there was no extraordinary betting. I didn't back him myself, and only one of the two owners had a small bet."

One trainer who did back his horse was Brian Gubby, who saw his stake disappearing westwards after Tribal Peace was demoted in favour of Masnun at Lingfield last month. The adjudication of the Surrey officials was overturned yesterday though, which left Gubby with mixed feelings. "I don't blame the local stewards as it was a difficult decision," he said. "It's a pity though as I still won't get my winnings from the £300 bet I had on Tribal Peace at Lingfield at 9-2."

Bookmakers intensify fixtures row

Racing's corridors of power seem poised to become a battleground in the wake of a critical report commissioned by Ladbrokes over which the British Horseracing Board and the Levy Board take opposing views. The report identified areas of concern with the fixture list and called for the "customer-friendly" approach to fixtures to be altered in favour of a more "Levy-friendly" system.

That call was backed by Rodney Brack, chief executive of the Levy Board, who said: "The Board is concerned at the fall in betting turnover. This year this is expected to be about 4%, and as a consequence the Levy yield will drop from £55m to £48m. Reduced turnover is attributable largely to the growth of the National Lottery but there is little doubt that the racecourse-customer-friendly fixture list has also had an adverse effect on off-course betting."

But David Oldrey, head of race-planning at the BHB, said: "The [report's] conclusions remain largely unsound so far as racing is concerned. Although we are making considerable efforts to accommodate the views of off-course bookmakers in agreeing on guidelines for the 1997 list it is disappointing to see so little actual response in substance from Ladbrokes."

Spell blessed by Cup weight

Warm Spell, the favourite for Saturday's Tote Gold Trophy, will sneak into the handicap proper thanks to a newly introduced clause in race conditions. Under old rules, he would be still 4lb out of a handicap headed by Moorish on 11st 10lb, but a new clause in Saturday's two-mile handicap hurdle stipulates that if no horse at 12st or above is declared at the overnight stage, the weights will be raised to 12st. That will bring Warm Spell up to the minimum 10st.

"Warm Spell is in pretty good form and I am very pleased with him," his trainer, Gary Moore said. "He hasn't been held up in his work. I would give Pridwell plenty of respect and they say Frickley has improved since we beat him at Kempton."

Tote Gold Trophy (Newbury, Saturday): Tote: 7-2 Warm Spell (from 3-1), 5-1 Express Gift (9-1), 13-2 Pridwell (8-1), 9-1 Frickley (8-1), 12-1 Cheryl's Lad (16-1), 12-1 Square Silk, 12-1 (14-1) Thornton Lad, 14-1 others.

Turf prospects are on thin ice

National Hunt followers face a bleak week with the cold snap likely to rule out any action on turf until Thursday at the earliest. Severe frost, which claimed yesterday's Newton Abbot card and today's fixtures at Warwick and Carlisle, also threatens tomorrow's meetings at Ascot and Ludlow.

Ascot, where there is a heavy frost in the ground, will hold an inspection at 11.30am today to determine the fate of the televised Reynoldstown Chase meeting, while it is an equally gloomy picture at Ludlow, where the inspection will be at 9am today. Only at Ayr, where they are due to race on Saturday, is there any optimism.

Even Wolverhampton's all-weather Flat fixture tomorrow is in slight doubt due to forecast snow, although the clerk of the course, Ashley Bealby, said: "We should be all right provided the snow is fairly steady."

LINGFIELD

HYPERION

1.50 ILANDRA (nap)
2.20 Copper Bright (nb)
2.50 Sweet Supposin
3.20 Baranov
3.50 Tael of Silver
4.20 Montone

GOING: Standard.
STALLS: 1m, outside. Remainder, inside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: Low in sprints.
■ Equitrack surface; left-hand, sharp undulating course.
■ Racecourse is south-east of town on B2028 Edenbridge road. Lingfield railway station (served by London Victoria) adjoins course. ADMISSION: All enclosures £9. CAR PARK: Club £3; remainder free.

SIS | RACING CHANNEL

■ LEADING TRAINERS WITH RUNNERS: R O'Sullivan – 46 winners from 263 runners gives a success ratio of 17.5% and a loss to a £1 level stake of £14.24; Lord Huntingdon – 37 winners, 171 runners, 21.6%, -£9.06; A Moore – 36 winners, 351 runners, 10.3%, -£13.75; M Johnston – 34 winners, 197 runners, 17.3%, -£12.08.
■ LEADING JOCKEYS: L Dettori – 61 wins, 239 rides, 25.5%, +£60.75; J Weaver – 60 wins, 262 rides, 22.8%, -£41.84; R Cochrane – 47 wins, 262 rides, 17.9%, -£38.31; D Biggs – 41 wins, 410 rides, 10.0%, -£167.58.
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: None. VISORED FIRST TIME: Zuno Flyer (2.50); Takeshi & Desert Water (3.20); Canary Falcon (4.20).
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: Digpast (4.20) won here on Thursday.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Royal Expression (1.50) has been sent 280 miles by Mrs M Reveley from Lingdale, Cleveland; Copper Bright (2.20) sent 270 miles by P Haslam from Middleham, North Yorkshire; Lochon (3.50) & PC's Cruiser (4.20) sent 258 miles by J Eyre from Sutton Bank, North Yorkshire.

1.50 CHERRY HANDICAP (CLASS E) £4,200 added 1m 4f Penalty Value £2,900

1 04050-6 ONE OFF THE RAIL (USA) (24) (CD) (K Higson) A Moore 6 10 0 ....Candy Morris 8
2 164-135 RIVAL BID (USA) (9) (C) (G Wiltshire) Mrs N Macauley 8 9 12 ....Amanda Sanders (5) 6
3 032036- BAG OF TRICKS (182) (CD) (Eurostrad Ltd) S Dow 6 9 10 ....A Daly (7) 7
4 3125-00 FATHER DAN (11) (C) (Wessex Fm (Whitcombe) Racing) Miss Gay Kelleway 7 9 8 ....A Whelan (3) 1
5 2/34125- ROYAL EXPRESSION (206) (Les De La Haye) Mrs M Reveley 4 9 8 ....A Culhane 10
6 320-005 ILANDRA (12) (Chelgate Public Relations Ltd) S Dow 4 8 13 ....J Weaver 2
7 305-252 NEVER SO RITE (10) (J S Guden) D Arbuthnot 4 8 9 ....R Cochrane 3
8 50-4415 ROYAL CIRCUS (12) (CD) (BF) (P W Hiatt) P Webber 7 8 8 ....D R McCabe (3) 4
9 50040-5 UNCHARTED WATERS (10) (R M Dyer) C Dyer 5 8 7 ....D Biggs 5
10 /40000- CHEVELEY DANCER (USA) (246) (G A Jackman) D Wilson 8 7 11 ....J Quinn 9
– 10 declared –

BETTING: 4-1 Rival Bid, 9-2 Never So Rite, 5-1 Royal Circus, Royal Expression, 6-1 Ilandra, 8-1 Bag of Tricks, 10-1 One Off The Rail, 12-1 others
1995: Majal 6 9 3 Dean McKeown 13-2 (J Wainwright) 7 ran

FORM GUIDE
ROYAL CIRCUS is probably the one to be on in a trappy race. The seven-year-old gave Paul Webber his first Flat winner over course and distance on 20 January when beating Gold Blade (winner next time) in an amateurs' handicap (Father Dan eighth and held) but could finish only fifth to Carrolls Marc in a limited stakes race five days later. He had plenty of use made of him on that second occasion and, despite battling on having been headed three furlongs out, weakened inside the last. David McCabe takes off a valuable 3lb today and Royal Circus seems sure to go close against modest opposition. Royal Expression has not been out since finishing fourth to Chacousa over hurdles at Wetherby on 14 November but may pose the main threat. Mary Reveley's runner won over Hamilton's 11 furlongs in the summer prior to a neck second to Royal York at Ripon, but he does look to have his share of weight making his all-weather debut. Never So Rite again tries 12 furlongs and it is perhaps unfair to question his stamina as he has twice finished runner-up in three attempts at the trip. The first of those was in the very weak race won by Erlking and the form of his most recent second to Sacred Mirror (Uncharted Waters sixth) was hardly boosted when the winner was well beaten here on Saturday. Rival Bid, successful over 10 furlongs here last month, should appreciate this easier 12 after apparently failing to last home in Beaumont's recent Wolverhampton race. Selection: ROYAL CIRCUS

2.20 DAMSON SELLING STAKES (CLASS G) £3,000 added 3YO 6f Penalty Value £2,190

1 0200-60 THE FRISKY FARMER (6) (G J Bush) W G M Turner 9 5 ....A Clark 5
2 304-066 WINGNUT (14) (Eddie Gleeson) J Bridger 9 0 ....J Quinn 7
3 0-44255 COPPER BRIGHT (10) (Gerald Salby) P Haslam 8 12 ....J Fortune 1
4 5004-23 ROWLANDSONS STUD (17) (Allen & Associates) G L Moore 8 12 ....M Fenton 3
5 6-0 COMMON DIVINE (20) (Darren Croft) C Murray 8 7 ....R Cochrane 4
6 2400-56 ELFIN QUEEN (6) (J David Abell) J L Harris 8 7 ....J Weaver 2
7 0-4 NORTHERN MIRACLE (12) (J J Ratcliffe) C Wall 8 7 ....G Duffield 6
– 7 declared –

BETTING: 5-2 Rowlandsons Stud, 7-2 Copper Bright, 9-2 Elfin Queen, 6-1 The Frisky Farmer, 7-1 Wingnut, 10-1 Common Divine, Northern Miracle
1995: Robo Magic 3 9 5 R Cochrane 9-4 (A Moore) 8 ran

FORM GUIDE
ELFIN QUEEN caught the eye on her all-weather debut and first run for Jimmy Harris when fifth to Miss Carottene here, keeping on from well off the pace to be nearest at the finish. Different tactics were adopted when she ran in this grade at Wolverhampton last week, as she made the running to halfway before fading from over a furlong out to be sixth to Mystic Tempo. Elfin Queen is almost certainly better on a sharp track like this and, drawn 2, is well worth another chance using forcing tactics. Rowlandsons Stud has run well on his last two starts over course and distance, chasing up Castle Governor and then finishing third to Princely Sound. He will appreciate the drop into a seller and is closely matched with my selection on official ratings. A penalty for a debut Beverley win as long ago as April makes life tough for The Frisky Farmer, but Copper Bright's recent defeat in the race won by the subsequently disqualified Monkey Zanty can be ignored, as he was badly hampered early on. He has had plenty of chances, though.
Selection: ELFIN QUEEN

2.50 PLUM CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS E) £4,200 added 1m 2f Penalty Value £3,023

1 001350- YUBRALEE (USA) (319) (D A Johnson) M Pipe 4 9 11 ....A Whelan (3) 9
2 163350- CHARM DANCER (130) (D) (Mrs R Cobbold) M Pipe 4 9 0 ....R Cochrane 4
3 012-052 SWEET SUPPOSIN (10) (C) (Mrs Christine Rawson) C Dwyer 5 9 0 ....L Dettori 8
4 654-343 PERILOUS PLIGHT (12) (C) (R Haim) W Muir 5 8 8 ....J Weaver 6
5 000-130 HAND OF STRAW (10) (Mrs Louise Murphy) P Murphy 4 8 7 ....S Drowne (3) 3
6 131000- EL ATREVIDO (FR) (77) (CD) (R F Betty) N Walker 6 8 6 ....J Stack (3) 7
7 313-111 MASNUN (USA) (10) (CD) (J W Page) R O'Sullivan 11 8 6 ....A Clark 1
8 1400-66 ELLY FLEETFOOT (10) (A S Reid) B Meehan 4 8 2 ....C Rutter 10
9 0000-03 ZUNO FLYER (USA) (12) (A Moore) A Moore 4 8 1 ....Iona Wands (7) 5
10 8000-03 SCOTTISH PARK (10) (CD) (Cleartherm Ltd) J L Harris 7 7 11 ....J Quinn 2
– 10 declared –

BETTING: 9-4 Masnun, 6-1 Sweet Supposin, 9-2 Perilous Plight, 11-2 Yubralee, 10-1 Scottish Park, 12-1 Zuno Flyer, 14-1 Hand Of Straw, 16-1 others
1995: Masnun 10 8 4 A Clark 2-1 (R O'Sullivan) 11 ran

FORM GUIDE
Masnun is proving tough to beat in this grade and has had most of today's opponents behind in gaining his last two wins. Roland O'Sullivan's admirable veteran beat Sweet Supposin half a length last time, with Scottish Park a surprising third and Hand Of Straw a disappointing seventh. Before that Masnun had beaten Mr Nevermind a short-head, with Hand Of Straw a length and three-quarters third, PERILOUS PLIGHT fourth, Sweet Supposin fifth and Zuno Flyer ninth. Masnun may well win again, but Sweet Supposin has a 4lb pull for half a length and is ridden by Frankie Dettori this time, so he is sure to be well supported. This trip is unknown territory, but Perilous Plight shapes as though he will stay and meets Masnun 4lb better for the two lengths he was beaten on 18 January. There was absolutely no disgrace in finishing third to the long-in-form Ruido over seven furlongs last time. Martin Pipe runs two, Yubralee and Charm Dancer. Yubralee won selling hurdles at Warwick and Taunton in November on his most recent runs but will do well to give away weight all round. Charm Dancer has flopped in two runs over timber and has a bit to do at the weights, but the fact that Ray Cochrane rides is encouraging. Selection: PERILOUS PLIGHT

3.20 NECTARINE MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £5,100 added 7f Penalty Value £3,615

1 400-4 CALL TOPHORSE (13) (Darren Croft) C Murray 4 9 10 ....R Cochrane 8
2 0305-00 DESERT WATER (3) (Miss Julie Self) J Bridger 4 9 10 ....J Quinn 9
3 300-6 GIFTBOX (USA) (13) (Charles C Walker) Sir Mark Prescott 4 9 10 ....G Duffield 2
4 00- MR STREAKY (508) (Chartwell Racing) L Montague Hall 5 9 10 ....S Sanders 1
5 MYSTIC LEGEND (Mrs Elizabeth Sinclair) T J Naughton 4 9 10 ....T Ashley (7) 4
6 33420-0 OFFICE HOURS (14) (R M Dyer) C Dyer 4 9 10 ....D Biggs 3
7 6 SHOWTIME BLUES (20) (Miss Anne Ewart) A Bailey 7 9 10 ....S Whitworth 7
8 5300-40 DON'T GET CAUGHT (18) (Mrs P W McGrath) J L Harris 4 9 5 ....T Ives 6
9 05260-0 TAKESHI (15) (J Jarroway) W Muir 4 9 5 ....Jean-Pierre Lopez 12
10 5 BARANOV (28) (Mrs Susan Nash) D Murray Smith 3 8 7 ....J Weaver 10
11 4- CORNISH SNOW (USA) (123) (Sheikh Mohammed) D Loder 3 8 7 ....L Dettori 6
12 0- VALIESS (123) (Mrs R M Blake) D O'Brien 3 8 2 ....G Bardwell 11
– 12 declared –

BETTING: 10-11 Cornish Snow, 5-1 Giftbox, 7-1 Baranov, 8-1 Takeshi, 11-1 Mystic Legend, 12-1 Call Tophorse, 14-1 Office Hours, 16-1 others
1995: Wild Rice 3 8 6 W Woods 10-11 (G Wragg) 7 ran

FORM GUIDE
David Loder's excellent strike-rate with his few all-weather runners means that CORNISH SNOW is sure to go off at a short price. The Sheikh Mohammed-owned Storm Cat colt, a 190,000-dollar foal, was blinkered on his debut at Ascot in a valuable maiden and pulled hard in second place until weakening inside the final furlong to be fourth of 11. Cornish Snow can certainly improve on that and it is to be hoped he will settle now the blinkers are left off. There is no realistic danger to Cornish Snow. Baranov was beaten a fair way when fifth to Well Drawn over 10 furlongs here on his debut, but he showed ability and can probably improve enough to pose the main threat. Office Hours has claims on his best form of the summer, but he was tailed-off last of 14 when a 33-1 chance in King Of Tunes' race here (1m2f) on his recent return to action. Call Tophorse drifted from 7-1 to 33-1 before finishing fourth to Farmost at Wolverhampton, with ex-French Giftbox, stablemate to the winner, sixth of 13. Both could improve sufficiently to reach the frame.
Selection: CORNISH SNOW

3.50 GREENGAGE HANDICAP (CLASS D) £5,100 added 6f Penalty Value £3,518

1 040-234 SIR TASKER (6) (CD) (J F Coupland) J L Harris 8 10 0 ....L Dettori 4
2 4021-34 ROBO MAGIC (12) (CD) (A D Green and Partners) L Montague Hall 4 10 0 ....S Sanders 3
3 0/40-003 ELTON LEDGER (8) (D) (The Posse) Mrs N Macauley 7 9 6 ....R Cochrane 1
4 /000-54 JAAZIM (14) (CD) (BF) (D Knight) M Madgwick 6 9 1 ....J Weaver 11
5 0603-01 LOCHON (10) (CD) (J Lynam) J Eyre 5 9 1 ....R Lappin 8
6 U04-55 WARM HEARTED (USA) (11) (Mrs A V Cappuccini) A Newcombe 4 8 13 ....N Gwilliams 10
7 4030-05 DUSK IN DAYTONA (14) (C James) C James 4 8 12 ....F Lynch (7) 8
8 60300-0 TAEL OF SILVER (11) (D) (Peter G Freeman) K Burke 4 8 7 ....M Fenton 7
9 000-632 MAPLE BURL (17) (G Steinberg) S Dow 3 8 7 ....A Daly (7) 8
10 51425-6 MOI CANARD (7) (CD) (Richard J Gray) B Pearce 3 8 5 ....D R McCabe (3) 2
11 5430-23 SUNSET HARBOUR (12) (R J Thomas) D Wilson 3 8 3 ....J Quinn 5
– 11 declared –

BETTING: 4-1 Lochon, 11-2 Maple Burl, 6-1 Sir Tasker, 7-1 Robo Magic, Jaazim, 8-1 Elton Ledger, 9-1 Moi Canard, 10-1 Tael Of Silver, Warm Hearted, 12-1 others
1995: Sir Tasker 7 9 3 S Sanders 20-1 (J L Harris) 9 ran

FORM GUIDE
SIR TASKER is not in the form he was at the beginning of last year, but he has run well enough in claimers and a seller on Fibresand recently to suggest he can defy 10st. Jimmy Harris's runner won this race last year off just a 3lb lower mark than today's and is 5lb lower than when landing the valuable final of a sprint series in March over the course and distance. Fourth to Primula Bairn at Wolverhampton last week, Sir Tasker should appreciate the return to this surface. Lochon is 5lb higher after winning over course and distance last time by two lengths from Invocation. The time was creditable, so he has every chance of following up. The three-year-olds get a healthy weight allowance so early in the year, so Maple Burl, Sunset Harbour and Moi Canard, all proven performers on Equitrack, must be considered. Robo Magic struggled to last out a fast-run seven furlongs when fourth of sixth to Ralos last time. He had finished six lengths third to Chewit over this trip the time before and goes off the same mark. Jaazim has given encouragement both starts here recently, particularly when a close fifth to Random over this trip. Jason Weaver takes over from an apprentice. Selection: SIR TASKER

4.20 PEACH AMATEUR RIDERS HANDICAP (CLASS E) £4,200 added 1m Penalty Value £2,955

1 0500-21 DIGPAST (5) (CD) (Miss Sarah Jones) R O'Sullivan 6 12 5 (5ex) ....Mr Davy Jones (4) 12
2 062110- TRAGIC HERO (120) (D) (Knight Hawks Partnership) M Pipe 4 11 5 ....Mr J Durkan 10
3 20300-2 ROMAN REEL (USA) (3) (C) (D) (BF) (K Higson) G L Moore 5 11 4 ....Mrs J Moore (4) 6
4 4020-00 CANARY FALCON (12) (L Pipe) John Berry 5 11 3 ....Mr M Rimell 8
5 60053-6 OWDBETTS (17) (K Higson) G L Moore 4 11 2 ....Mr K Goble (4) 3
6 0604-03 DREAM CARRIER (6) (R E Peacock) R Peacock 8 10 12 ....Mrs C Peacock (5) 11
7 00000-3 PC'S CRUISER (11) (D) (PC Racing Partners) J L Eyre 4 10 11 ....Miss Diana Jones 7
8 4045-04 LOVE LEGEND (5) (C) (George S Thompson) D Arbuthnot 11 10 8 ....Mrs D Arbuthnot 1
9 3550-40 MONTONE (5) (B Shaw) J Jenkins 6 10 6 ....Dr M Mannish (4) 4
10 0000-40 JON'S CHOICE (5) (H S & E M Yates) B Preece 8 10 3 ....Miss L Boswell (5) 9
11 530006- BREEZED WELL (131) (D) (Mrs H Noonan) B Cambidge 10 9 13 ....Mrs H Noonan (4) 2
12 000-203 DON'T DROP BOMBS (USA) (17) (C) (D) (Miss J Feilden) D Thom 7 9 9 ....Miss J Feilden 5
– 12 declared –

BETTING: 11-4 Digpast, 9-2 Tragic Hero, 13-2 Roman Reel, 8-1 Don't Drop Bombs, Dream Carrier, 9-1 Montone, 10-1 Love Legend, PC's Cruiser, 12-1 others
1995: Mentalasanythin 6 11 9 Miss Bridget Gatehouse 7-2 (A Bailey) 9 ran

FORM GUIDE
Davy Jones landed his first victory under Rules when partnering Digpast to a fluent success over course and distance last Friday. That was Digpast's fourth win on the Equitrack and, despite a 5lb penalty putting him on 12st 5lb, Roland O'Sullivan's runner, with Jones again aboard, can confirm recent superiority over Dream Carrier, beaten more than six lengths in third, as well as Love Legend, Montone and Jon's Choice, who were further in arrears. However, Digpast might be hard pressed to concede a stone to TRAGIC HERO, who makes his all-weather debut. My selection gained consecutive wins on turf last August in a seller at Bath and a claimer at Goodwood. He hasn't raced on the level since October but will strip as fit as any, having gone down threequarters of a length behind odds-on Denging at Ludlow last month. Tragic Hero was also runner-up before that, behind Alfuma Dancer at Exeter, beaten a couple of lengths with a 12-length gap to the third, and has a good rider in John Durkan. Love Legend, whose two wins here were in sprints, gets a mile well enough, but the two course victories of Don't Drop Bombs were at 12 furlongs, as was his most recent effort when third behind Royal Circus, with Montone, who meets him on identical terms, a couple of lengths adrift in fourth. Roman Reel, a winner at 10 furlongs here, was a two-length second to Dodam over today's trip last Saturday on his first appearance since November and should go close. PC's Cruiser, third to six-length scorer Kingchip Boy over the journey at Southwell 11 days ago, could again go well with Diana Jones in the saddle. Selection: TRAGIC HERO

RACING RESULTS

SOUTHWELL

1.30: 1. CHADLEIGH LANE (F Lynch) 4-1; 2. Daawe 9-4 jt fav; 3. Serious Fact 9-1. 2 jt fav. 12 ran. 4, 3½. (R Hollinshead). Tote: £5.80: £1.90, £1.30, £1.10. Dual Forecast: £8.00. Computer Straight Forecast: £13.15. Tricast: £22.00. Trio: £4.70.

2.00: 1. RECORD LOVER (Mrs S Bosley) 10-1; 2. Greek Night Out 13-8 fav; 3. Youge 9-4. 9 ran. ½, 1¼. (M Chapman). Tote: £9.80: £2.20, £1.10, £1.60. DF: £11.70. CSF: £27.20. Tricast: £48.49. Trio: £8.00.

2.30: 1. COASTGUARDS HERO (M Wigham) 4-1; 2. Principal Boy 10-1; 3. General Haven 7-1. 9 ran. 5-2 fav Red Acuisle (6th). ¾, hd. (M Usher). Tote: £6.90: £2.10, £3.90, £2.10. DF: £23.80. CSF: £40.42. Trio: £35.40.

3.00: 1. TEMPERING (A Culhane) 7-1; 2. Calder King 5-1; 3. Star Performer 10-1. 12 ran. 5-1 jt fav Our Tom (5th) & Mentalasanythin (6th). nk, 1. (D Chapman). Tote: £7.00: £2.00, £2.10, £5.00. DF: £12.70. CSF: £40.83. Tricast: £327.07. Trio: £54.20.

3.30: 1. PINE RIDGE LAD (R Lappin) 13-2; 2. Maple Bay 7-2 jt fav; 3. High Premium 12-1. 13 ran. 7-2 jt fav Leif The Lucky. 3, 6. (J L Eyre). Tote: £6.70; £1.60, £1.90, £3.00. DF: £14.10. CSF: £30.02. Tricast: £210.91. Trio: £31.00. NR: Sweet Mignonette.

4.00: 1. SEA DEVIL (L Charnock) 4-5 fav; 2. Sense of Priority 3-1; 3. La Dama 100-1. 6 ran. 4, 1¼. (M Camacho). Tote: £1.90; £1.30, £2.50. DF: £2.30. CSF: £3.63.

4.30: 1. SWEET MATE (C Teague) 13-2; 2. Hi Rock 11-2; 3. Quinzii Martin 10-1. 11 ran. 7-2 fav Catcharge Blue. sht-hd, 1¼. (S Bowring). Tote: £6.50; £2.60, £2.30, £2.80. DF: £30.40. CSF: £43.02. Tricast: £337.02. Trio: £123.20.

Jackpot: £27,642.20.
Placepot: £13.20. Quadpot: £12.50.
Place 6: £34.62. Place 5: £29.48.

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LINGFIELD	101	201	301
GREYHOUNDS	122	222	422

sport

Justin Thomas should be forgiven his mistake against England and be encouraged to run rather than kick at the opposition

ALAN WATKINS

on rugby

Why do British sides persist in giving away possession? Twice I have heard Wayne Shelford, the great New Zealand No 8, ask this question. On the first occasion it was at a post-match press conference at Twickenham. On the second it was at a rugby dinner in central London. ft was clearly something about which he felt strongly.

Possession, he told us, was a precious commodity, the most valuable in the game. He might have been the late and largely unlamented Shah of Lan talking about oil, and denouncing the Western world for wa,ting it.

The form of waste which Shelford had in mind was quite clear. He was not referring to a loss of possession in ruck or maul, on one's own throw into the line-out or even on one's own put-in to the scrum. That could happen to anyone, though strikes against the head are becoming increasingly rare. No, Shelford was referring specifically to kicks downfield which were made in the vague hope that something would come of them, but which succeeded merely in handing the ball over to the other side.

I kept thinking of his words as f watched the England and Wales match on Saturday. This time I was not in the press box but in a seat high in the West Stand. Accordingly the pattern of play was rendered more emphatically, even if some of the detail (later recovered by my video recorder) may have been lost.

Kevin Bowring, the Welsh coach, is clearly an intelligent man. But I do not think the style he imposed on the Welsh side and, in particular, on Justin Thomas was specially clever. Time and again the Welsh full-back kicked the ball upfield in the general direction of Mike Catt, in the expectation that Catt would make a mess of things.

In view of Catt's recent form for England, this was not a wholly unreasonable hope. Why Jack Rowell, if he really wants to play the sort of rugby he claims to want, does not recall Paul Hull – the most unjustly treated player in the whole of England – continues to puzzle me. This, however, is not the point at issue.

Catt generally would make a mess of it, to the extent of failing to find touch. Justin Thomas would then proceed to catch the ball (once he knocked on badly) and put in a repeat performance, hoofing it upfield. Catt would finally find a poor touch.

What was the object of the exercise? ft was, we are told, not only to "put pressure on Catt" but also to "keep the game away from the English forwards". Wales are fortunate that Catt is no Serge Blanco, though last season he hinted that he might turn out to be one. Blanco would have set up or himself scored several times. Catt failed to do this. And all Wales did was throw – or, rather, kick – away possession.

Thomas was chosen as an attacking full-back whose greatest strength was his speedy and elusive running. In fact I thought he was about to embark on a frolic of his own when he started to run from behind his own line rather than touch down or kick more or less immediately. Instead he moved up to his own 22 only to put in a low kick which Jeremy Guscott charged down; the rest we know.

Barry John has suggested in what we old journalists have been taught to call Another Newspaper that Justin Thomas should be replaced by Mike Rayer. Certainly Rayer is another unlucky player, almost as unlucky as Hull. Nevertheless f think Thomas should be forgiven his mistake and encouraged to run rather than kick at the opposition.

John has also suggested that Nigel Davies should be replaced at inside centre by Neil Jenkins. I am more sympathetic to this, though not because he had a specially bad game. ft was not as good a game as that enjoyed by his outside centre, Leigh Davies, whose strong running made Hemi Taylor's try and who looks like being in the Welsh side for a decade. Still, Nigel Davies put in some good tackles. I would none the less bring back Jenkins as a three-quarter. He is a more reliable place kicker than Arwel Thomas, and his presence would take some of the weight off Thomas's shoulders.

If Robert Howley was the man then, in a game that is losing its exuberance and individuality, Arwel Thomas was the personality of the match. I am not sure what Geoff Cooke had in mind when he said afterwards that Thomas was a boy among men. If he meant that the new Welsh outside-half played in an immature way, he was manifestly wrong. If, however, he meant that Thomas looked even younger than his 21 years, like a waif from a Victorian orphanage, he was clearly right. Long may there be a place in rugby for someone of 5ft 8in and 10st 10lb – though he might not get into any side run by the muscle-obsessed Cooke.

Front man: Cliff Brittle, the new man at the top of the RFU, is joined by Tony Hallett and Will Carling at Twickenham's top table yesterday Photograph: David Ashdown

Invader Brittle predicts peace

Steve Bale reports on the first meeting of the RFU chaired by a man it opposed

Cliff Brittle, the man who you could say broke the Rugby Football Union, yesterday sat at the Twickenham top table and announced that the RFU's second attempt at a special general meeting on the passing of amateurism would bring peace in our time.

Brittle is the parvenu from the Isle of Man who shocked the establishment by trouncing the RFU committee's own nomination – and the unanimous choice of its executive committee – to be chairman of that self-same executive. Last Friday he therefore presided for the first time over men who had been as one in opposing to him.

The first sgm having been abandoned in chaos without a single word's debate on the report of the RFU commission which had been supposed to be its centrepiece, the RFU is planning another back where it all began at the Birmingham International Convention Centre on 24 March. That happens to be Passion Sunday.

"I see no problem at all," Brittle said yesterday. "No one has ever said to me one word against the top end being paid, and they want to see the top end of the game being successful. The game is an open game but we don't know some of the questions let alone the answers. Some people will want to be paid to play and some parts will want to remain as they are."

Brittle, a 54-year-old retired businessman who has represented Staffordshire on the Union since 1989, beat John Jeavons-Fellows, one of the RFU's fnternational Board delegates, by 647 votes to 332 at the aborted sgm on 14 January. The important support of the counties was seen as a defiant gesture against the stridency with which the big clubs were demanding special treatment (ie more money from the RFU) in order to cope with professionalism.

However, yesterday Brittle, who once played for Sale and also coached his native county, ventured that his discussions with Peter Wheeler of Leicester, prime mover in the English First Division clubs, had been encouraging. Moreover, he assured these clubs that urgently finalising the new professional dispensation was his priority.

"Since the decision of the International Board in August to go open, the top end of the game has serious problems," Brittle said. "These have to be resolved and we have to pay attention to these problems now and not later on. There's no question the speed of decision-making has to be improved immensely. There is no way the national clubs can wait two or three months for a decision from the Rugby Union."

Brittle said of his first executive meeting: "I was satisfied with the outcome and I'm confident that it will all settle down very soon." On the other hand, neither Bill Bishop, the RFU president (who tried to dissuade Brittle from standing), nor Jeavons-Fellows was present at Twickenham yesterday as would normally have been the case hitherto. Next up for Brittle is to meet members of the RFU commission on Thursday to discuss their report.

The RFU is readying itself to fight a definitive legal action on the International Board's 180-day residential requirement for players moving countries. Legal advice taken by the union runs counter to that given to the IB as it affects the players of the home unions as well as other European Union nationals.

"All our advice is that it would not be sustainable," Tony Hallett, the RFU secretary, said at Twickenham yesterday. "It would be a restraint of trade on a professional moving from one country to another." The RFU is hoping the home unions and others in the EU will reach mutual agreement in accordance with the IB's get-out clause. As it is, there will be no bar on Nick Popplewell, the Ireland prop, turning out for Newcastle against Harlequins in the Pilkington Cup on Saturday.

Christie bids farewell to the boards

Athletics

MIKE ROWBOTTOM

Linford Christie has written off his indoor season following the injury he sustained at the weekend's AAA indoor championships. If he sticks to his promise to make this his final year of sprinting, he will not be seen competing again on the boards.

The 35-year-old Olympic champion, who damaged an adductor muscle at the top of his left leg in the 60m final, will now concentrate on regaining fitness for a summer campaign which may or may not include a defence of his 100 metres title in Atlanta.

"Linford will not be doing any more indoor meetings," a spokesman from his management company, Nuff Respect, said yesterday. "He will be having treatment to get the injury fixed and then return to training."

Christie, who plans to visit medical specialist Dr Müller Wohlfarth in Munich this week, was due to race against the world indoor champion, Bruny Surin, in Saturday's Ricoh International at Birmingham.

"He is obviously frustrated because he came back from Australia in such excellent shape," the spokesman added. Christie won 100m races in Adelaide and Perth, recording 10.00sec.

Tony Ward, the British Athletic Federation spokesman, said: "It's disappointing, but the priority has to be his farewell summer season. We don't want anything to jeopardise that."

Meanwhile, Britain's Olympic marathon selectors have filled three of the six available places for Atlanta, naming Peter Whitehead, Richard Nerurkar and Liz McColgan after a three-hour meeting. The selectors employed four key criteria for Olympic selection: a sub 2hr 10min marathon (or 2.30 for women); an excellent performance in a debut; a good performance in hot and humid conditions such as will be experienced in Atlanta; and a top five place in a maj championship.

Whitehead, fourth in l summer's world championsh and Nerurkar, the 1993 Wo Cup winner who was seventh Gothenburg, are both carryi injuries and have been told show their fitness by competi in a half-marathon by 31 M

The announcement h attracted criticism from M Batty, coach to the 1993 Lo don Marathon cham Eamonn Martin, who wo Chicago marathon last ye "Peter Whitehead has fulfill the selectors' criteria and go luck to him, but to pick Rich Nerurkar too looks li favouritism to me," he said.

Batty stresses the fact tl Martin has actually won ma marathons he has entered. T selectors appear to have be swayed in Nerurkar's favour his last two championship p formances and the condition which they were achieved.

The world championsh took place in extreme heat – 2 and over – although humidity was not great – ris from 39 per cent to 4 per c during the race. The previo year, however, at the Europe Championships in Helsin Nerurkar had shown his abil to run in extreme humidity – per cent – in finishing fourtl

The remaining names will announced after the Lon Marathon on 21 April, wh could become a run-off for third place given yesterday's nouncement that Martin Paul Evans, second in November's New York M thon, will take part, along Gary Staines and Jon Steve Brace, runner-up in ton last month, and Hudspith, the Common Games bronze medal also realistic contende team place.

McColgan was disa with seventh place in h back marathon in Tok vember, but the selec satisfied with that and in last year's world cha 10,000m in hot conditi

Teddington buoyed by draw

Hockey

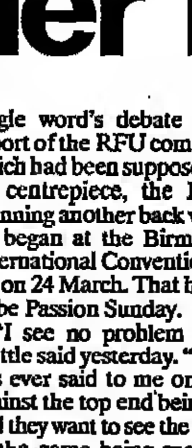
Teddington's manager, Neil Campling, was a satisfied man on hearing their home draw against Canterbury in the quarter-final of the Hockey Association Cup, **writes Bill Colwill.**

"Realistically, to qualify for a second year in Europe our aim must be to win the cup. I will be looking forward to playing them with a full side," he said yesterday. Canterbury's manager, Graeme MacDonald, was less enthusiastic: "Not impossible," he said, "but we would have preferred a home draw."

Guildford, the cup holders, entertain Reading, while the National League leaders, Southgate, travel to Old Loughtonians.

HA CUP Quarter-finals: Havant v East Grinstead; Guildford v Reading; Old Loughtonians v Southgate; Teddington v Canterbury. *(Ties to be played Saturday 16 March).*

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Bob Hatton

In their current form, Leeds United may count themselves lucky that the Birmingham City side they meet in the Coca-Cola Cup semi-final on Sunday is not of the calibre of the one Bob Hatton represented 24 years ago. Among those alongside the much-travelled striker in their 1972 FA Cup semi-final against Leeds were Kenny Burns, Gordon Taylor, Bob Latchford and Trevor Francis. Leeds won 3-0 but then they were at the zenith of their powers.

Hatton's nine-club career peaked at Birmingham, where he scored 58 of his 222 League goals. It ended 12 years ago at Cardiff. "I decided to call it a day at 36," he said. "I wanted to get out with at least some semblance of respectability."

Nowadays, after a fashion, he plays for another Gordon Taylor team, visiting clubs on behalf of PFA Financial Management, alongside Vince O'Keefe, Des Bremner and Dave "super sub" Fairclough. "We were all recruited from the financial services industry," Hatton said. "We try to see as many players as possible to give advice on pensions and financial planning."

Hatton, who worked on building sites and the docks as a young man in Hull, received comparatively little advice. "My life has been a sequence of lucky breaks," he said. "I was introduced to insurance while I was still playing. When I finished I was able to start full-time immediately."

He doubles as an expert summariser for BBC Radio WM and will be at St Andrews on Sunday in that capacity.

Jon Culley

Housewife pins faith in her motley cre

Stuart Alexander on the challenge from Eastbourne's Jacky MacGillivary (right) to the best sailors in the world

A gauntlet was thrown down bravely in one of the bastions of yacht racing yesterday by a "housewife and mother" from Eastbourne. Speaking at the Royal Thames Yacht Club in Knightsbridge, Jacky MacGillivary promised of the Sussex Challenge for the 1997-98 Whitbread Round the World Race: "We will be prepared both mentally and physically to take on the rest of the world and come out on top."

The announcement comes at a time when the Whitbread as a whole is seeking to reinject some momentum, particularly in terms of top-level contestants, when Britain coold do with its own fully professional campaign, and when the rival Grand Mistral Race, scheduled to start this September, is reaching crunch point on its own line-up.

The 42-year-old MacGillivary, whose husband is part of the crew and is project director, refused to disclose how much of the nearly £3m needed for the project has so far been committed. She has some support from Bupa International, the private health insurer, though they see this as a local, rather than international, initiative.

That, at least, means the challenge is buying a boat. They have chosen the 1993-94 contender from Ukraine, Hetman Sahaidachny, subject to survey and title provenance, which came a poor seventh. MacGillivary admits that the yacht is rather on the heavy side, but feels that its potential has not yet been realised and that she has spotted winning potential. "It's a super hull," she said.

fn addition, she is saying that the challenge can make it to the start line in September 1997, which implies that she also has commitments for the £250,000 entry fee needed to take part. Assuming the yacht was bought for a maximum of £200,000, the further budget necessary to maintain it for 18 months, make modifications, develop sails, build new sails for each of the legs and send them to the stopovers in a workshop container means a budget already pushing towards £1m.

Bupa's representative, Neil Horseman, refused to confirm that his firm was putting in anything like £1m. Other support has so far been confined to local companies, the Eastbourne College of Arts and Technology, and a link to the charity Business Against Drugs.

Sussex Challenge's chairman, Nikolai Askaroff, a food company boss and accountant, conceded that he is looking for an additional £2m. For that he may have to look beyond Sussex, despite the availability of big company budgets at Gatwick and Brighton.

What neither he, nor Bupa, nor the other emissaries from Sussex, seemed to have any doubt about was MacGillivary's dream of her amateurs taking on opponents in a race that has developed from sporting endeavour and adventure into a full-blooded ocean grand prix contested by skippers and crews of the highest calibre.

Her own crew lis references to a form who joined "becau nothing better to d hairdresser whose i clude swimming and ing. Other crew picked because of to demonstrate th tude, rather than record of success i elons of yacht rac

So why had chosen to tilt at t rather than the Challenge, specifi for amateurs wh themselves, and sailing the wrong world?

She poured s idea. "The BT give any advan who wants to ra el," she said. "I bread is the pr not for wimp wimps."

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Football

7.30 unless stated

FA CUP FOURTH ROUND
Bolton v Leeds (7.45)
Huddersfield v Peterborough (7.45)
Ipswich v Walsall (7.45)

ENDSLEIGH INSURANCE LEAGUE SECOND DIVISION
Blackpool v Burnley
Bristol Rovers v Chesterfield
Carlisle v York (7.45)
Wycombe v Rotherham (7.45)
Swansea v Stockport

THIRD DIVISION
Chester v Northampton
Colchester v Scarborough (7.45)
Rochdale v Preston (7.45)
Scunthorpe v Bury
Torquay v Barnet (7.45)
Darlington v Hereford

TENNENT'S SCOTTISH CUP THIRD ROUND
Berwick Rangers v Dundee Utd
Morton v Montrose

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE FIRST DIVISION
Postponed: Clydebank v Dumbarton *(playing 17 February).*

SECOND DIVISION
Clyde v Queen of the South

GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE
Dover v Altrincham (7.45)
Bromsgrove v Telford (7.45)

SPALDING CUP QUARTER-FINAL
Kettering v Slough (7.45)

BEAZER HOMES LEAGUE Premier Division: Atherstone v VS Rugby; Gravesend and Northfleet v Merthyr (7.45). Midland Division: Evesham v Buckingham Town (7.45); Leicester Utd v Sutton Coldfield; Tamworth v Nuneaton Borough. Southern Division: Erith and Belvedere v Sittingbourne; Weymouth v Bashley. Dr Martens Cup fourth round: Hinckley Town v Moor Green.

ICIS LEAGUE First Division: Basingstoke v Marlow; Billericay v Thame; Heybridge Swifts v Staines; Wembley v Leyton Pennant. Second Division: Dorking v Egham; Hampton v Saffron Walden; Leatherhead v Bracknell. Third Division: Hertford v Northwood. Carlton Trophy third round: Hungerford v Hampton.

UNIBOND LEAGUE First Division: Warrington v Lancaster. League Cup fourth round: Leek v Accrington Stanley.

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE First Division: Folkestone Invicta v Whitstable (7.45); Sheppey v Corinthian; Slade Green v Cray (7.45).

UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE First Division: Portfield v Pagham.

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE Premier Division: Arnold v Sheffield; Ossett Town v Denaby. President's Cup fourth round: Hatfield Main v Selby; Liversedge v Brigg.

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE First Division: Flixton v Burscough. League Cup third-round replay: Trafford v Kidsgrove.

JEWSON EASTERN LEAGUE Premier Division: Cornard v Felixstowe; Harwich v Newmarket. League Cup quarter-finals: Diss v Tiptree; Fakenham v Ely. Quarter-final replay: Warboys v Halstead.

INTERLINK EXPRESS MIDLAND ALLIANCE: Barwell v Pershore (7.45); Chasetown v Willenhall; Hinckley Athletic v Sandwell Borough (7.45); Rocester v Halesowen Harriers (7.45); Rushall v Bolehall (7.45).

LEAGUE OF WALES: Llansantffraid v Holywell (7.45). League Cup quarter-final first leg: Flint v Connah's Quay. Postponed: Caersws v Ebbw Vale.

SMIRNOFF IRISH LEAGUE First Division: Ballyclare v Omagh; Newry v Distillery. Coca-Cola Floodlit Cup first round second leg Crusaders v Ballymena. Quarter-finals: Cliftonville v Coleraine; Glenavon v Ards; Glentoran v Linfield.

PONTINS LEAGUE First Division: Everton v Stoke (7.0); Notts County v Manchester Utd (7.0). Second Division: Manchester City v Grimsby (6.45).

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION First Division: Charlton v Wimbledon (2.0) *(at Welling Utd FC);* Portsmouth v Bristol Rovers (7.0); Queen's Park Rangers v Arsenal (7.0) *(at Harrow Borough FC);* Watford v Southampton (2.0); West Ham v Norwich (7.0). Second Division: Cardiff City v Newport AFC.

UNDER-18 INTERNATIONAL: England v Italy (7.45) *(at Yeovil Town FC).*

FA YOUTH CUP Fourth round: Oldham Athletic v Millwall; Plymouth Argyle v Crystal Palace *(at Saltash Utd FC).*

Rugby Union

7.0 unless stated

TOUR MATCH: Ulster v New South Wales (7.30) *(at Ravenhill, Belfast).*

HEINEKEN WELSH LEAGUE First Division: Neath v Aberavon.

CLUB MATCH: Tredegar v Newbridge.

WRU MIDWEEK COMPETITION Pool A: Pontypool v Abercynon. Pool B: Narberth v Dunvant; Tenby Utd v Llandovery; Wales Police; Llanha… Dr Bonymaen v Tond…

Rugby Lea…

7.30 start unless st…

SILK CUT CHALLEN… haven v Halifax. Po… (playing tomorrow).

JJB SPORTS ACAD… Brean Academy v F…

Other spo…

BASKETBALL: Ne… Crystal Palace v S…

BOXING: British s… ship: R Warnon (L… (Glasgow) (Basildon…

SNOOKER: Benson &… bley).

TENNIS: LTA women…

هكذا من الأصل

Ireland pin hopes on McCarthy

Football

GUY HODGSON

The Republic of Ireland looked back to go forward yesterday when they announced their next manager. Having had the best years in their history under an English centre-half, they hoped the trick would work again when they appointed Mick McCarthy.

The Barnsley-born Millwall manager succeeded Jack Charlton yesterday with one advantage over the man who was so successful he earned the sobriquet "Saint Jack". Whereas his predecessor won his caps for England McCarthy played 57 [illegible] in the green of Ireland.

McCarthy, who will leave Millwall, has been given a two-year contract for the unenviable task of following Charlton's 10 years, in which the Irish reached the finals of two World Cups and a European Championship.

"Of course I've learned from Jack," McCarthy, who was the Republic's captain 23 times under Charlton, said. "But the biggest thing he has taught me is to be single-minded, to do things the way I think best.

"It is a daunting prospect following Jack, but I'm not going to attempt to copy his ways. I'm Mick McCarthy and, to be honest, I have had more arguments with Jack than anybody else in my career."

McCarthy, 37 tomorrow, has the initial task of steering the Republic to a third World Cup finals in France in 1998. "That is the target," he said, "and it won't be easy, despite what some people are saying about our draw in the qualifiers.

"We'll see what happens after that. Jack never had a contract while he was manager but I've signed for two years, and if we are successful maybe they will offer me 10. If not, I have no illusions. I'll probably be sent packing on the next ferry."

The Football Association of Ireland announced McCarthy's appointment after Kenny Dalglish, Alex Ferguson and Joe Kinnear dropped out of the equation.

The FAI president, Louis Kilcoyne, insisted McCarthy was the only man to be offered the job. "Joe Kinnear came very close," he said, "but he was honest with us and told us he had ambitions in the Premier League. A lot of names were thrown into the ring, and about 70 per cent of the speculation was true, but we're confident we've got the best man for the job."

McCarthy's first match will be against Russia in Dublin on 27 March, followed by a game in Prague against the Czech Republic on 24 April. His first priority will be to address a squad that is ageing. "I'm not saying where I'm looking to strengthen the team, but there are players, some of them great players, who are 35 or 36. Those are the ages and you can put the faces to them. I'm hopeful we can continue to keep getting a supply from England, like Jack.

"The Bosman ruling abut foreign players should mean that clubs don't put so much pressure on their players to turn away from us and stay English. I want to look at all the players who could be eligible for us."

An obvious target would be Tottenham Hotspur's Chris Armstrong, who played under McCarthy at Millwall. Charlton repeatedly tried and failed to attract him to the Republic and the new manager admitted: "He is one I will obviously want to consider."

McCarthy will also be considering his own backroom staff, one of whom could be his assistant at the New Den, Ian Evans. Other contenders are Kevin Moran and Frank Stapleton, both of whom played alongside him in the Ireland team.

"I can't talk about the people I am considering bringing in with me," he said, "because some of them are currently in jobs at clubs, but it will be resolved fairly soon and the appointments will be my decision."

Back to the future: The Republic of Ireland turn to another Englishman, Mick McCarthy, to fill Jack Charlton's shoes Photograph: PA

Millwall begin search for new manager

With Mick McCarthy gone, Millwall are now expected to look for a new player-manager or tracksuit-type, with Chelsea's Nigel Spackman and the out-of-work Dave Bassett among names being touted.

Ironically, Bassett, the former Wimbledon manager who was replaced by Howard Kendall at Sheffield United, was one of those linked with the Republic of Ireland vacancy. Mike Walker, the former Everton and Norwich City manager, is also thought to be among the candidates.

The Millwall chairman, Peter Mead, warned that the man who follows McCarthy into the Lions' Den faces a demanding challenge.

"It is a tough act for anybody to follow with a line-up of previous Millwall managers including George Graham, John Docherty, Bruce Rioch and, of course, Mick," he said. "So, although the decision needs to be made quickly, we must carry on that tradition.

"I still believe that with a fresh impetus we are in with a good chance of being involved in the final shake up at the end of the First Division season. Everything we do will be aimed towards that.

"I will let our fans know what is happening as quickly as it seems appropriate."

Mead considered McCarthy's appointment by the Irish as "a great compliment" to Millwall, adding: "On a personal note I am sad that I am losing a manager whom I admire enormously and a friend. He brings to his new job great qualities, particularly in the area of decency and integrity. As far as a new appointment is concerned, I have my own ideas and I am actively pursuing them.

Mead may be left with two vacancies. Ian Evans, McCarthy's assistant, is being tipped to follow him into the Republic set-up as the manager of the Under-21 side.

The Football Association of Ireland is trying to negotiate a parting-settlement with Maurice Setters, who did that job under Jack Charlton.

Schofield may be missing for Leeds

Rugby League

DAVE HADFIELD

Leeds could be without their captain, Garry Schofield, for the start of the Super League. Schofield tore a pectoral muscle during Leeds' narrow Silk Cut Challenge Cup victory over Swinton on Sunday and could be out for up to two months, which would mean him missing the kick-off at the end of March.

That is a further blow for a club without a specialist scrum-half, following the sale of James Lowes and the failure to sign Canberra's Jason Ferres.

Kevin Tamati, the former New Zealand forward and Salford coach, has been appointed coach at Chorley, one of the clubs warned that they will be kicked out of the league unless their results improve. Tamati replaces Bob Eccles, while the other club under a suspended sentence, Highfield, have appointed Jim Crellin as team manager.

Bev Risman, the former dual international and the driving force behind the growth of the Student Rugby League, has been named as director of development at the London Broncos.

Two ties in the fourth round of the Challenge Cup have little prospect of being played before this weekend's scheduled fifth round. Workington, who were due to play Widnes last night, and Whitehaven, paired with Halifax, are both under heavy snow.

Meanwhile, the tie between Warrington and Leeds has been confirmed as the televised match on Saturday. The surviving amateurs, West Hull, will play their home tie against Wakefield Trinity at The Boulevard on Friday night.

There are fears that rugby league could fold in South Africa, following complaints that SARL has not received the £110,000 they are owed from the World Cup. The SARL's president, Ockie Oosthuizen, said: "If we do not get the money we will be forced to liquidate. Believe me, if that is allowed to happen, rugby league will never be played in South Africa again."

The World Cup director, Maurice Lindsay, has told them that their share of the profits is being withheld because of qualms over the way the game is being run there.

Branco ready to join Juninho at Boro

Middlesbrough, who have plummeted faster than the temperature since autumn, had the concern generated by six successive League defeats lifted a little yesterday when the Brazilian defender, Branco, arrived in England intent on joining the club, **writes Guy Hodgson**.

The 31-year-old World Cup full-back met club officials last night and will resume talks this morning, having been sold on Teesside because of compatriot Juninho's reception. "He is very happy here," he said. "We've played together before in the national squad and we are good friends – that is the main reason why I settled on Middlesborough.

"I had a few offers from other English clubs and also from teams in Japan, America and Spain. But I decided I wanted to play with Juninho." Branco, whose move to Middlesbrough could be blocked by his high wage demands, has bought out his contract with a Brazilian club, Internacional, and is a free agent.

Juninho will be available for tomorrow's FA Cup fourth-round home tie with Wimbledon and Saturday's Premiership visit of leaders Newcastle. He was due to leave for a training camp in preparation for an international tournament in Argentina later this month, but has delayed his departure.

Another import, Sweden's Tomas Brolin, had his ego massaged a little yesterday as his Leeds manager, Howard Wilkinson, yesterday denied reports of a fall-out with his £4.5m record signing. "All talk of a rift, bust up or fall out is absolute rubbish," he said.

"He has not settled into Premiership football as well as everyone would have liked. He has not produced the sort of form of which we all know he is capable." Brolin was dropped for Saturday's 3-0 defeat at Aston Villa. "Everyone at the club hopes he will produce his best football for Leeds United."

Manchester United have confirmed an interest in South Africa's Mark Fish. The 20-year-old centre-back was watched by an Old Trafford director, Sir Bobby Charlton, as he helped his country win the African Nations' Cup on Sunday.

Roger Stanislaus will also be anxiously waiting to see what develops today as Leyton Orient decide what they intend to do with their 27-year-old left-back after his suspension for a year for taking cocaine.

He meets the club's board, which may decide to sack him. "He is a nice guy," the chairman, Barry Hearn, said, "but he has brought this on himself and has to pay the price. The good name of Orient Football Club must take priority."

Stanislaus, who denied any attempt at "performance enhancement" when he appeared before the disciplinary tribunal, can be dismissed under regulation 63, section four, covering "serious or persistent misconduct".

Asprilla deal 'still on'

Faustino Asprilla's £6.7m move to Newcastle United from Parma could still go ahead, despite the Premiership leaders' doubts about the Colombian striker's knee and their reported attempts to have the fee reduced by £2.5m.

"I think we should be reasonably optimistic," the Italian club's lawyer, Leandro Cantamessa, said yesterday. "We're not talking here about a good club and a bad club but two good clubs. It's when you get good and bad that you don't reach an agreement."

The Parma chairman, Giorgio Pedraneschi, said on Sunday after he met Newcastle officials in Milan that Asprilla's move had been blocked by differences over the player's fitness.

However, Cantamessa said the deadlock was due to "misunderstandings" between the clubs over the nature of their agreement and Asprilla's condition. "When a footballer plays at top level like Asprilla he's bound to take knocks but that doesn't mean he's injured," the lawyer said. He said contacts with Newcastle were continuing, adding: "I think we can still reach an agreement without any price cut."

TODAY'S NUMBER

1

The French teams who have been given automatic entry into the Tour de France. GAN, led by Britain's Chris Boardman, are the host country's sole representatives among 18 teams, of whom seven are Italian.

SPORTING DIGEST

Häkkinen back at wheel

Motor racing

Mika Häkkinen returned to a Formula One cockpit yesterday for the first time since crashing during practice for last November's Australian Grand Prix.

The Finn, who fractured his skull in Adelaide, successfully completed a number of short runs in one of last year's McLarens at the Paul Ricard circuit in southern France.

"Mika has made a remarkable recovery and this is a test just to see how he feels about driving," a McLaren official said. "If it goes well he could test the new car in Portugal next week."

Häkkinen will make his first public appearance since the accident at the launch of the Mercedes-powered MP4/11, at Estoril in Portugal on Sunday.

Grand Prix rivals Benetton launched their defence of the world constructors' championship when they unveiled their B196 Renault-powered car in Taormina, Sicily.

Team manager Flavio Briatore said that the loss of world champion Michael Schumacher to Ferrari had motivated Benetton to mount a powerful defence of the title. "This has fired the team up and we want to make a very strong start again this year," he said.

The B196 car, powered by a new Renault V10 engine, features a seven-speed longitudinal gearbox and revised rear aerodynamics. It also has a new suspension system and cockpit surrounds, in line with the stricter regulations for the 1996 season.

Hicks proves Roe's master

Snooker

Andy Hicks was in devastating form as he recorded a hat-trick of century breaks to knock out David Roe 5-2 in the first round of the Benson and Hedges Masters at Wembley yesterday.

It was the Tavistock left-hander's first appearance at Wembley but he disguised his nerves well to set up a clash with Thailand's James Wattana today for a place in the quarter-finals.

"It seems as though I relish playing on the big occasion," said Hicks, who secured a sponsor's invitation to the event after reaching the semi-finals of both the World and UK Championships last year.

"I felt brilliant from the moment I walked out there. There's no doubt I tend to raise my game when the conditions and atmosphere are good."

Hicks is the second player to compile three centuries in a best-of-nine-frames match at the event, following the achievement of Stephen Hendry in a second-round match against Ken Doherty in 1993.

Hicks did not have the ideal preparation for his first appearance at the Masters, having suffered a defeat against the unheralded Tony Chappel in the first round of last week's Regal Welsh Open.

A 67 break won Hicks the first frame and although Roe then took blue, pink and black to level at 1-1, he found himself trailing 3-1 at the mid-session interval. Hicks finished in style by putting together breaks of 125 and 103.

Rare English sympathy for Australians

Cricket

England yesterday sympathised with Australia's World Cup plight, while expressing complete satisfaction over their own security arrangements in Lahore.

Ray Illingworth and his squad have been following events as best they can from Pakistan while warming up for next week's Group B match against New Zealand.

News that Australia had decided not to go to Sri Lanka in the wake of last week's Colombo bombing came as no real surprise. But the fear of Australia's captain, Mark Taylor, that they could be kicked out of the World Cup shocked Illingworth.

"Such an outcome would devalue the whole competition," Illingworth said. "But I don't see any necessity for that at all.

"If their game against Sri Lanka cannot be rescheduled elsewhere then the obvious alternative is for them to forfeit it, but play the rest of the Group A matches in India as planned.

"You have to feel sympathy for Australia. It would have been a difficult situation for us if we had been going to Colombo after what happened there last week. In addition, some of their players are said to have had death threats made against them."

Measures to protect England include armed soldiers in their hotel and a heavy military presence around the park ground where Mike Atherton and his team spent six hours practising yesterday.

American football

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE PRO BOWL (Honolulu): NFC Stars 20 AFC Stars 13.

Basketball

The Chicago Bulls' 18-game winning streak was ended on Sunday, as they were defeated 105-99 by the Denver Nuggets. It was only the Bulls' fourth loss in 45 games this season and they remain well ahead of the pace set by the 1971-72 Los Angeles Lakers, who went 69-13 for the best record in NBA history.

NBA: Indiana 90 New York 83; Orlando 122 San Antonio 109 (ot); Phoenix 123 Washington 115 (ot); Atlanta 106 Charlotte 104; Denver 105 Chicago 99; LA Lakers 110 Utah 103; Golden State 96 New Jersey 92.

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	PCT	GB
ATLANTIC DIVISION				
Orlando	33	13	.717	–
New York	28	18	.636	4
Washington	22	22	.500	10
Miami	20	26	.435	13
New Jersey	18	27	.400	14.5
Boston	17	28	.378	15.5
Philadelphia	8	36	.182	24
CENTRAL DIVISION				
Chicago	41	4	.911	–
Indiana	31	15	.674	10.5
Cleveland	25	20	.556	16
Atlanta	25	20	.556	16
Detroit	22	21	.512	18
Charlotte	21	23	.477	19.5
Milwaukee	16	27	.372	24
Toronto	13	32	.289	28
WESTERN CONFERENCE				
MIDWEST DIVISION				
San Antonio	29	14	.674	–
Utah	30	15	.667	–
Houston	30	17	.638	1
Denver	19	26	.422	11
Dallas	15	28	.349	14
Minnesota	12	31	.279	17
Vancouver	10	35	.222	20
PACIFIC DIVISION				
Seattle	33	12	.733	–
Sacramento	24	17	.585	7
LA Lakers	26	19	.578	7
Portland	22	24	.478	11.5
Phoenix	20	24	.455	12.5
Golden State	20	25	.444	13
LA Clippers	16	29	.356	17

Boxing

Russia's Yun Arbachakov retained his World Boxing Council flyweight title when he outpointed Raul Juarez of Mexico in Tokyo yesterday.

Cricket

The West Indian fast bowler Winston Benjamin has told Hampshire he will fulfil his contract as their overseas player this summer. Benjamin, sent home from last summer's tour of England for disciplinary reasons, was omitted from the West Indies' World Cup squad.

RED STRIPE CUP (Third day of four) Port-of-Spain: Guyana 173 (R Dhanraj 4-64) and 152 (N de Groot 78, E Antoine 5-47); Trinidad and Tobago 238 (P Simmons 80, K Mason 67, B Browne 5-48) and 88-2. Trinidad and Tobago win by eight wickets. Bridgetown: Windward Islands 233 (K Sylvester 77) and 318 (U Pope 74, J Murray 70); Barbados 339 (A Griffith 101) and 78-0. Montego Bay: Jamaica 424-7dec (R Samuels 126, D Morgan 57, N Perry 74); Leeward Islands 227 and 127-6.

Football

Oxford are to leave the Manor Ground at the start of the 1997-98 season after signing a £15.3m contract for a new 15,000-seat stadium at Minchery Park. The Second Division club have already recived planning consent from the city council and work is due to start in April.

Partick Thistle defender Steve Pittman has been suspended for eight matches by the Scottish Football Association. Pittman was reported by referee Jim McGilvray for comments on three separate occasions and each offence carries an automatic one-match ban. The SFA said that because this took Pittman through the 16-point disciplinary threshold and because of his previous record, he received an additional five-match ban.

Internazionale's Italian international midfielder, Nicola Berti – who has been linked with Arsenal – will be out of action for three months with a knee injury. The 28-year-old tore ligaments in his left knee in training on Saturday.

FA CARLSBERG VASE Sixth-round draw: Brigg v Colber Row; Wivenhoe or Mangotsfield v Raunds or Torpoint; Belper or Citheroe v Peacehaven and Telscombe; Flixton v Canvey Island. Ties to be played Saturday 24 February.

TRANSFERS Alistair Gibb (midfielder) Norwich to Northampton.

LOAN TRANSFERS: Eric Nixon (goalkeeper) Tranmere to Blackpool; Lee Butler (goalkeeper) Barnsley to Scunthorpe; Paul Edwards (defender) West Bromwich Albion to Bury.

PONTINS LEAGUE First Division: Postponed: Liverpool v Sheffield Wednesday; Newcastle v Tranmere; Wolves v Nottingham Forest.

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION First Division: Postponed: Swindon v Millwall; Tottenham v Chelsea.

SUNDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Italian League: Napoli 2 (Boghossian 14, Paganin og 85) Atalanta 0. Spanish League: Rayo Vallecano 1 (Acuno 30) Barcelona 1 (De la Peña 77). Portuguese League: Ference 1 Belenenses 3; Maritimo 1 Tirsense 0; Benfica 1 Estrela do Amadora 0.

Golf

A final round of 78 for a three-round total of 222 left Britain's Tony Jacklin 19 shots behind the winner, Bob Murphy, in the Royal Caribbean Classic at Key Biscayne, Florida.

The Pebble Beach National Pro-Am was washed out yesterday for the first time in its 50-year history, with only two rounds completed. The 180 professional participants will split the purse, each taking £3,000, although the money will not be added to their 1996 PGA Tour money-list totals.

Ice hockey

NHL: Tampa Bay 5 Buffalo 2; Vancouver 4 Winnipeg 2; NY Islanders 5 Dallas 3; Chicago 4 Anaheim 1.

BRITISH LEAGUE Premier Division (Sunday): Cardiff Devils 8 Newcastle Warriors 4; Durham Wasps 9 Fife Flyers 6; Milton Keynes Kings 1 Humberside Hawks 3; Slough Jets 7 Basingstoke Bison 5.

Motor racing

IMSA ROLEX 24-HOUR RACE (Daytona): 1 W Taylor, S Sharp, J Pace (all US) Oldsmobile R and S Mk-III, 697 laps, 103.324 mph; 2 G Moretti, M Papis (both It), B Wollek (Fr), D Theys (Bel) Ferrari 333SP, 697; 3 J Downing, B Hamlet, T McAdam, B Waddell (all US) Mazda Kudzu DLM, 649. Selected: 15 D Marshall, S Marshall (both US), M Kong, P Chambers (both GB) Porsche 911, 598; 46 G Lees, K Acheson, T Needell (all GB) Lister Storm, 254; 54 H Stuck (Aut), B Adam (US), 7 Boutsen (Bel), J Fergus (US), D Bell (GB). D Schroeder (US) Porsche 911 Turbo, 181.

Rugby League

GREAT BRITAIN ACADEMY (v France, Craven Park, Hull, today, 7.30): D Cardiss; R Smyth (both Wigan), W Flynn (Wakefield), N McAvoy (Salford Reds), D Arnold (St Helens); C Kitching (Hull), D Lawford (Sheffield Eagles); N Baynes, I Talbot (both Wigan), J Field (Leeds), C McKinney (Oldham Bears), I Knott (Warrington), A Morley or M Vassilakopoulos (both Leeds). Substitutes: M St Hilaire (Huddersfield), A Leatham (St Helens), J Coventry (Castleford), Vassilakopoulos or P Anderson (St Helens).

Rugby Union

SCOTLAND DEVELOPMENT SIDE (v New South Wales, Netherdale, Sunday): G Fraser (London Scottish); A Stanger (Hawick), I Wynn (Orrell), A James (Wasps), H Gilmour (Heriot's FP); M McKenzie (Stirling County), A Nicol (Bath, capt); R McNulty (Stewart's Melville FP), S Scott (Melrose), M Stewart (Blackheath), M McVie (Edinburgh Academicals), K Stewart (Cardiff), B Ward (Currie), G Mackay (Stirling County), S Holmes (London Scottish). Replacements: M McGrandles (Stirling County), D Bain (Melrose), J Hamilton (Leicester), S Grimes (Watsonians), G McIlwham (Glasgow High/Kelvinside), N Dickson (Boroughmuir).

Skiing

MEN'S ALPINE WORLD CUP Super-giant slalom (Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Ger): 1 W Perathoner (It) 1min 19.62sec; 2 L Alphand (Fr) 1:19.83; 3 P Wirth (Aut) 1:20.05; 4= S Krauss (Ger), J Leskinen (Fin) 1:20.30; 6 K Ghedina (It) 1:20.57; 7 R Kröll (Aut) 1:20.66; 8 P Vitalini (It) 1:20.82; 9 A Filshkin (Rus) 1:20.92; 10 S Locher (Swit) 1:21.03. Selected: 50 G Bell (GB) 1:22.70. Leading super-G standings: 1 H Knaus (Aut) 207pts; 2 A Skaardal (Nor) 200; 3 L Kjus (Nor) 180; 4= F Nyberg (Swe), Kröll 161; 6 Alphand 156; 7 Perathoner 148; 8 Ghedina 119; 9 Vitalini 116; 10 A Fadon (It) 103. Leading overall World Cup standings: 1 Kjus 974pts; 2 G Mader (Aut) 803; 3 M von Grünigen (Swit) 738; 4= Alphand, Knaus 688; 6 A Tomba (It) 616; 7 Nyberg 545; 8 M Reiter (Aut) 533; 9 S Amiez (Fr) 459; 10 J Kosir (Sloven) 437. Selected: 137 Bell 6. Leading Nations' Cup standings: 1 Austria 9,383pts; 2 Switzerland 5,804; 3 Italy 5,067; 4 Germany 3,676; 5 Norway 3,474.

Snooker

BENSON AND HEDGES MASTERS (Wembley) Second round (Sunday): S Davis (Eng) bt K Doherty (Irl) 6-0. First round (yesterday): A Hicks (Eng) bt D Roe (Eng) 5-2.

Snow reports

Resort	Conditions (Lower)	Conditions (Upper)	Area open	Last snow	Weather	Forecast
AUSTRIA						
Alpbach	fair	powdery	80%	4.2	cloudy	variable
Ischgl	hard	powdery	100%	4.2	cloudy	cloud/snow
Obergurgl	good	packed	100%	4.2	cloudy	cloud/snow
FRANCE						
Chamonix	patchy	powdery	70%	5.2	unsettled	snow
Risoul	packed	powder	90%	5.2	unsettled	snow
Val Thorens	packed	powder	100%	5.2	unsettled	snow
ITALY						
Madesimo	powdery	powdery	100%	2.2	clear	clear
Bormio	icy	powdery	100%	2.2	clear	clear
Sauze d'Oulx	packed	powdery	100%	2.2	mixed	variable
SWITZERLAND						
Grindelwald	hard	good	60%	5.2	cloudy	snow
Verbier	thin	good	80%	5.2	cloudy	variable
NORWAY						
Geilo	good	good	60%	24.1	clear	clear
SCOTLAND						
Cairngorm	thin	limited	10%	5.2	snow	snow
Glenshee	limited	thin	20%	5.2	snow	snow
UNITED STATES & CANADA						
Beaver Creek	powder	powder	100%	4.2	clear	cloudy
Taos	powder	powder	60%	4.2	snow	cloudy

Information supplied by Ski Hotline

Speed skating

China's Yang Yang set a new world record of 2min 28.93sec yesterday in the women's short-track 1500m at the Asian Winter Games in Harbin, China.

Tennis

ATP TOUR Leading rankings: 1 A Agassi (US) 4,495pts; 2 T Muster (Aut) 4,474; 3 P Sampras (US) 4,465; 4 B Becker (Ger) 4,297; 5 M Chang (US) 3,592; 6 Y Kafelnikov (Rus) 2,709; 7 T Enqvist (Swe) 2,519; 8 J Courier (US) 2,400; 9 G Ivanisevic (Croa) 2,174; 10 W Ferreira (SA) 2,144; 11 R Krajicek (Neth) 1,678; 12 S Bruguera (Sp) 1,666; 13 M Stich (Ger) 1,619; 14 T Martin (US) 1,470; 15 A Boetsch (Fr) 1,409; 16 M Rosset (Swit) 1,391; 17 M Washington (US) 1,317; 18 A Medvedev (Ukr) 1,279; 19 G Schaller (Aut) 1,256; 20 J Siemerink (Neth) 1,209.

WTA TOUR Leading rankings: 1= S Graf (Ger), M Seles (US); 2 C Martinez (Sp); 3 A Sanchez Vicario (Sp); 4 I Majoli (Croa); 5 A Huber (Ger); 6 M Maleeva (Bul); 7 G Sabatini (Arg); 8 K Date (Japan); 9 M J Fernandez (US); 10 C Rubin (US).

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IAN WOOSNAM
Rediscovering the magic 25

MICK McCARTHY
Ireland's new manager 27

Carling's critique enlivened by plea for early selection

Rugby Union
STEVE BALE

If there is as much tension between Jack Rowell and Will Carling as has come to be popularly supposed, it will not have been helped by yesterday's call from Carling – in the wake of the savaging his team took for the drab way they beat Wales – for Rowell to make his selection to play Scotland immediately.

The England captain had been summoned to Twickenham in Rowell's absence to give what was billed as a "Five Nations mid-point review". But instead he presented a ritually upbeat critique of how England played that was in direct contradiction to the view expressed in the same forum by Don Rutherford, the RFU's technical director.

As England are not involved in the next round of Five Nations matches, they have the option of extra practice and an unwontedly early announcement of the team. This would suit Carling. "But that's just me and that has to come from the management and I don't want to get myself in trouble," he said hastily. "As captain, I would like to get the team named and their minds focused as soon as possible. But Jack has to make that decision; it's not up to me."

Carling's apprehension about the manager's reaction stems from last week's pre-match "revelation" that he no longer sat in on selection – which was hardly news but was enough to leave Rowell fuming with anger over how the media ogres would interpret it. The subsequent adverse response to the Welsh match will not have helped.

But, as if in answer to recent speculation, Carling was emboldened to contrast the management of Rowell with that of his predecessor, Geoff Cooke. "Geoff was a meticulous planner and a great man for detail. The view now is that to compete with the southern hemisphere, to have a team that will compete at the 1999 World Cup, you need players who will play a very flexible game.

"Maybe we didn't have those players before, so we didn't have that luxury. We need a broader canvas and Jack paints on a big canvas. It's more of a challenge to players to come in with more freedom to express themselves but with more responsibility."

These responsibilities, as Rutherford then made clear, now include the dread word "entertainment" (of spectators paying £33 a head) – a responsibility that evidently was not discharged against Wales, whose merits relative to England's Rutherford nevertheless haughtily dismissed.

"It's not acceptable to play a sterile sort of game," he said. "There were times in that game when we were so much on top I was expecting 40 points. We *should* have won by 40 points; we were that much better. But we didn't keep the ball in our hands; we kicked it away – and so badly, which compounded it.

"A few years back if we had beaten Wales by half a point we would all be cheering. But it's not acceptable now. People want to be entertained, and just winning is not acceptable. They demand entertainment and feel short-changed. The England players have to take that aboard."

Alan Watkins

Brittle pride, page 26

W Indies join in Colombo boycott

Cricket
TONY COZIER in Barbados
TIM MCGIRK in Delhi and
HUGH BATESON in London

The World Cup is in chaos less than a week before it is due to start, with the West Indies joining Australia in saying they will not play in Sri Lanka after last week's car bomb which killed 79 people and injured up to 1,200.

The West Indies have asked for their game against Sri Lanka in Colombo on 25 February to be rescheduled, the request coming just hours after the Australians, who are refusing to play there on 17 February, had a similar demand rejected.

Although the official statement from the West Indies Cricket Board of Control did not stipulate what the reaction would be if the request was refused, the president, Peter Short, later confirmed the team would not go to Colombo, even if it meant forfeiting the match. "We've acted on reliable intelligence information received through diplomatic channels and other reliable sources as well as cricket connections," he said.

Short said there had been no pressure from the players, who are at a one-week preparation camp in Barbados prior to leaving for the World Cup on Wednesday. "They were concerned but told us they expected us to do the right thing by them," he said. "I think we've done that. We felt it would be unfair to subject them to the kind of mental pressure they would be under in the environment in Sri Lanka as we understand it at present."

The West Indian announcement came during the night on the sub-continent, but Australia's decision had already drawn a bristling response from tournament organisers and in Sri Lanka, whose Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kardirgamar, said: "If any campaign is mounted by the Australian government to persuade other countries not to come, that would be considered a hostile act." He also summoned the Australian High Commisioner.

The organising committee, Pilcom, said they would not reschedule games. "The World Cup matches will be played as scheduled," Pilcom's secretary, Jagmohan Dalmiya, said. "Assurances were received from the Board of Control for cricket in Sri Lanka that the Sri Lankan government will leave no stone unturned to ensure the strictest security and safety of the officials of all teams in Sri Lanka.

"I hope sport and its spirit will prevail above all considerations and we will request the Australian board to reconsider and play matches as scheduled."

The president of Sri Lanka's cricket board, Ana Punchihewa, echoed the feeling. "We are naturally disappointed, but I hope the door is not closed since there are another 12 days left to persuade the Australian board to change its mind," he said.

While negotiations between Pilcom and the Australians and the West Indies continue, the other two countries due to play in Sri Lanka – Zimbabwe and Kenya – were also keeping a close eye on events. The Kenyan team, who play in Kandy on 6 March, said they were content to wait and see how things developed. "We are in no hurry to make a decision," Jasmer Singh, their tour manager, said. "We feel that the assurances given for the security of the teams should not be taken lightly."

Zimbabwe still expect to play in Colombo on 21 February, the Zimbabwe Cricket Union's chief executive, Don Arnott, said: "Our decision remains unchanged. We are going to play in Sri Lanka but we will continue to monitor the security situation. We are confident that the situation is under control and we also have confidence in the organisers of the World Cup tournament that they will make the right kind of decision whenever the situation demands."

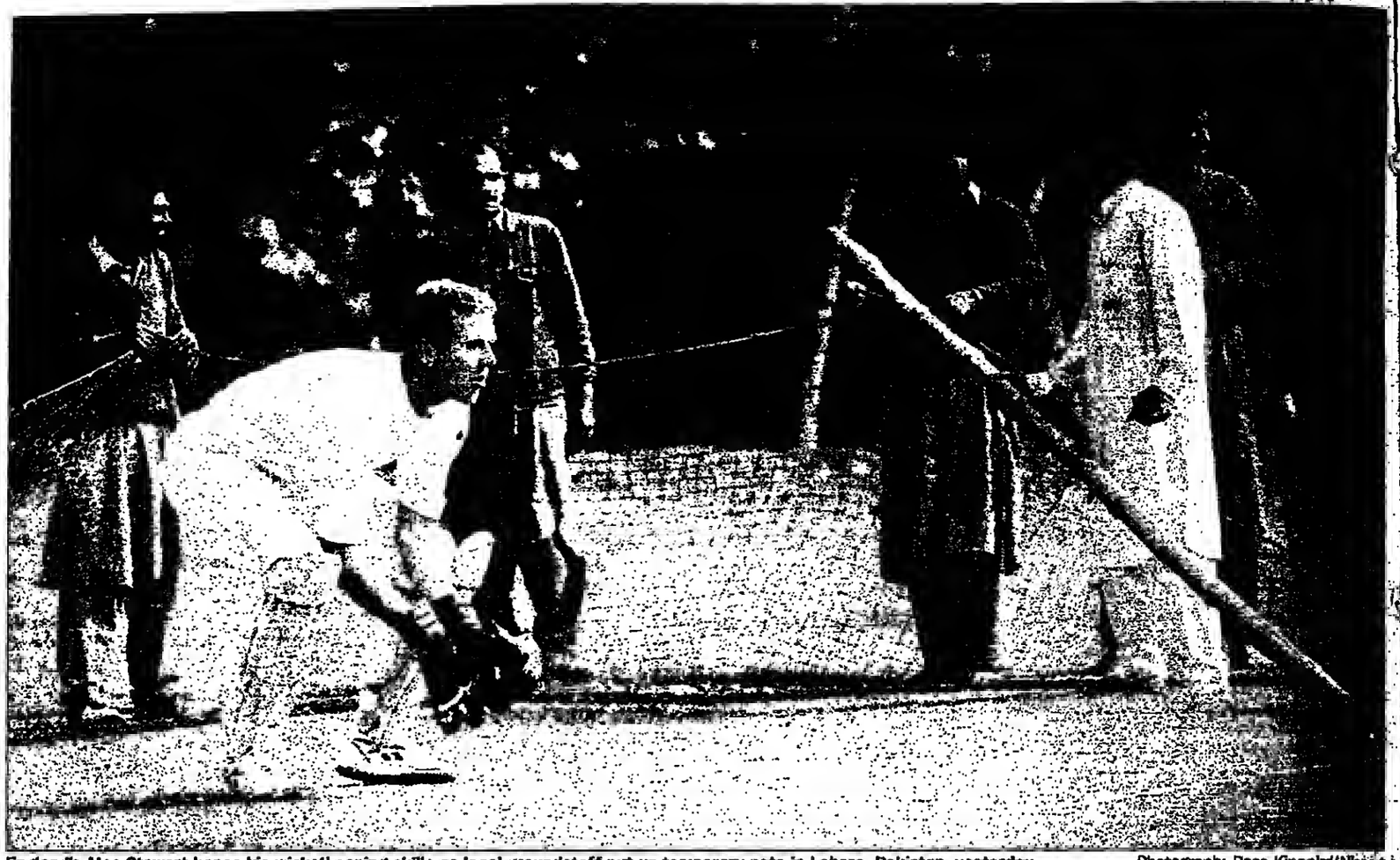
Leicestershire, who were due to make a pre-season tour of Sri Lanka, withdrew yesterday, and are making plans to tour South Africa instead.

The effect on the competition could be huge. A decision to allow countries simply to forfeit games would make a mockery of the qualification stages, which would be seriously compounded if Zimbabwe and Kenya join the boycott. On the other hand, disqualification, which the Australian captain, Mark Taylor, acknowledged yesterday as a "possibility", would rob the tournament of two of its largest draws and consequently much credibility.

Tamil rebels have bombed and killed many people in Colombo during their 12-year civil war, but have never targeted foreigners. Privately many Sri Lankans feel the cricketers are overreacting. "What's the fuss," one official said. "There have been bomb blasts in some of the other World Cup venues – Karachi, Bombay and New Delhi – and no one is complaining."

Pakistan could be another hot spot for visiting teams, with the Pakistani and Indian armies fighting over disputed areas in Kashmir. Some of the World Cup cities, like Karachi, Peshawar and Lahore (where England are staying peacefully at the moment) have suffered recently from ethnic and sectarian violence.

England in Lahore, page 27



England's Alec Stewart hones his wicketkeeping skills as local groundstaff put up temporary nets in Lahore, Pakistan, yesterday Photograph: Ross Kinnaird/Allsport

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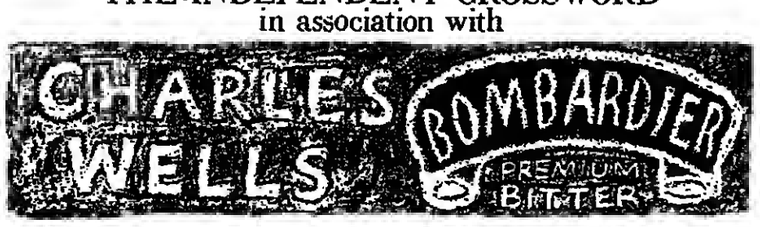

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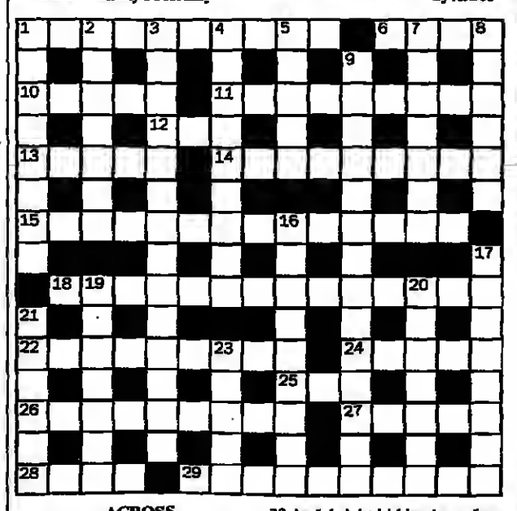
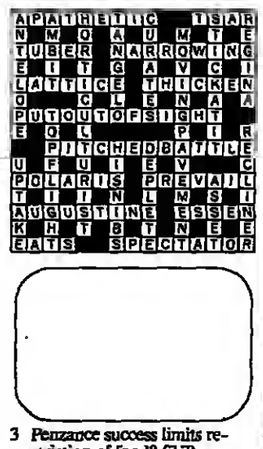


Monday's Solution



ACROSS
1 Working on GB canal men will need something to eat (10)
6 A visitor off street has a fever (4)
10 Look up and see arbiter's hesitation (5)
11 It could enhance image of the gaudy Narcissus? (5-4)
12 Northern Ireland Liberal will achieve nothing (3)
13 Bail possibly given to one who might need this? (5)
14 Dun poor relative to meet editor and is not put off (9)
15 Know about inclination to dismiss dangers of plots (7,7)
18 Land ruined by Carolina leaser? (6-8)
22 Awful sight hidden by oaf can no longer be seen after this (6-3)
24 Plain copper's set back in cover (5)
25 Multiple growth potential in innovation (3)
26 Pious request to get flu treated (9)
27 Husband ought to yield some money (5)
28 Knot's done up (4)
29 Refuse to handle animal of non-conformist (5,5)

DOWN
1 Don't allow instruments of torture where soldiers live (8)
2 Grieve at cliff's redevelopment (7)
3 Penzance success limits restriction of food? (7,7)
4 Abundance of illness found in a criminal (9)
5 Very good but not upright? (5)
7 One who has too much by a huge amount? (7)
8 Take shape as a space organisation (6)
9 Part of body ought to upset British leaders (8,6)
16 I stop coal supply for preacher (9)
17 What Arnold got in Admiral's boat? (8)
19 Pull girl up for being a slow-coach (7)
20 Comprehend one new thing Aelred writes about Germany (7)
21 One with conviction secures margin easily added (4-2)
23 Not liking a learner's lights? (5)

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Capriati comes back in Paris

Tennis
JOHN ROBERTS

Jennifer Capriati will return to the sport in Paris next week, encouraged, no doubt, by the successful rehabilitation of Monica Seles, and keen to defend her Olympic Games singles title in Atlanta.

The one-time American prodigy, whose disaffection with the professional tour led to an arrest for shoplifting and a problem with drugs, has been given a wild card for the Open Gaz de France.

Capriati's second attempt to revive her career comes less than two months before her 20th birthday. She has played only one match in almost two and a half years since losing to the Georgian Leila Meskhi in the first round of the 1993 United States Open.

That defeat was hard for Capriati to take. The previous year she lost in the third round to the unseeded Canadian Patricia Hy, having returned with the gold medal she won in Barcelona with a victory against Steffi Graf in the Olympic final.

Capriati's last appearance was in Philadelphia in November 1994. Although she gave a spirited performance in losing a first-round match against Germany's Anke Huber, who went on to win the tournament, it did not provide the impetus to sustain a comeback.

Capriati began to fall apart in September 1993, when a simmering rebellion against the influence of her father, Stefano, developed into a full-scale revolt. She had experienced nothing but tennis, making her professional debut at Boca Raton, Florida, 23 days before her 14th birthday. Before striking a ball, she had attracted long-term tennis clothing and racket contracts estimated to be worth $5m (£3.25m).

Tim Henman, ranked 276 in the world eight months ago, has climbed to a career-best 79 after reaching the semi-finals of the ATP Shanghai Open last week. The 21-year-old is only 40 places behind Canadian-born Greg Rusedski, who changed his allegiance to Britain last May.

At 14, she was the youngest Grand Slam semi-finalist, at the French Open; the youngest player to be seeded, at Wimbledon, and the youngest to win a match at the All England Club. At 15, she beat Martina Navratilova to become the youngest Wimbledon semi-finalist.

Before her name disappeared from the world rankings in 1994, because of inactivity, she had risen as high as No 6 and had added $1.49m (£975,000) in prize money to the fortune from sponsorships and endorsements.

Capriati: comeback at 19

In 1991, she appeared with Seles on the cover of the *Forbes Magazine* listing the world's 40 highest-paid athletes, but the income began to diminish when personal problems manifested themselves in misdemeanours attracting world-wide publicity.

In December 1993, Capriati was arrested in Florida for taking a ring from a shop without paying for it. In January 1994, she returned to school, but later that year police found her in possession of marijuana, and she spent time on a drug rehabilitation programme.

Capriati and Seles are represented by the International Management Group, who helped smooth the path for Seles's return with an exhibition match against Navratilova in Atlantic City last July. And it was they, as the organisers of next week's Paris tournament, who announced the wild card for Capriati yesterday.

Board pops question to pill boxers

Boxing

Frank Bruno and Nigel Benn are to be questioned by the British Board of Control over a report that the two World Boxing Council champions are consuming 150 vitamin pills a day at their Tenerife training headquarters.

The Board's medical panel – concerned that such a prodigious intake of vitamin pills may be detrimental to the boxers' health – wants to discover the extent of their extra dietary intake. Professor Tom Sanders, head of nutrition and diet at King's College, London, has been quoted as saying that such a quantity "can cause problems".

Bruno and Benn are preparing together in the sunshine of the Canary Islands in readiness for their title defences against Mike Tyson and Sugar Boy Malinga respectively. The Board secretary, John Morris, said: "If you read a story that says Britain's top boxers could be putting themselves at risk, we want to know how and why."

The Board's chief medical officer, Adrian Whiteson, added: "I don't believe any vitamins they take would have any benefit to them whatsoever, other than a psychological one."

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